

SERMONS

On several

SUBJECTS;

SHEWING

Gods Love to Mankind.

Salvation is by Grace.

Wilderness-Provision.

God a Strong Hold in Trouble.

Light is to be improved.

By *J. Lougher* Minister of the Gospel.

L O N D O N,

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T H E

Epistle Dedicatory.

To my esteemed Christian Friends in
and about *Southrepps* and *Alby* in
Norfolk.

Dear Friends,

THe kind Acceptance my former
weak endeavours found with you,
have induced me to this second attempt
of the same nature. I have contracted
the Sum of several Sermons into a nar-
row compass. They were once delivered to
your Ears, they are now in your Eye,
the Lord writ them in all your hearts.

I expect to be variously censured;
Some will reject them for their plainness,
as not being suited to the humour and
style of this ingenious Age; Others will
dislike them as not agreeing in some
things with their own sentiments. My
Apology is only this; As I have a great
value for the persons and labours of eve-
ry learned and good man, though of a dif-

The Epistle Dedicatory.

ferent perswasion from me in things extrafundamental; so, I thank God for it, no man can have so mean an esteem of me as my endeavours, but I have lower thoughts both of my self and them. For I do ought to know my self better than others do or can. And by this I have learned in some measure to esteem others better than my self. Worthy Friends, if God will please to make the following discourses by his Blessing, instrumental to quicken and excite any among you to make sure of an interest in the special love of God, to seek Salvation by Grace, to trust God for provision in your wilderness condition, to make God your strong hold in a day of trouble, and to walk while you have Gospel-light, I have my chief end in this publication. I desire the continuance of your Prayers to God for me, and commend you all in the Perusal of these weak meditations to the care and Blessed influences of Jesus Christ. For whose sake I am

Your Servant in the Gospel

JOHN LOUGHER.

S E R M O N I.

John 1. 4. 16.

God is Love.

Knowledge is one great accomplishment of the rational creature : Of all Knowledge, there is none so accomplishing as that which is Divine and Spiritual : Of all Divine Knowledge, the Knowledge of God, and his perfections, is the most excellent : Of all the perfections of God, there is none so sweet and desirable to be known, as this of his Love : This was the Element in which this Apostle and beloved Disciple St. *John* lived ; and it made such impressions upon his heart, that he breaths little but love throughout this Epistle, and makes known something of what he had experience of in his own Soul ; and not only declares the love of God, but asserts God himself to be love, in the Text now before us : Which words are a short description of

A 3 God,

God, and a Proposition in themselves and so let us take them.

Doct. *That God is Love.* 'Tis more easie to declare what God is not than what he is; hence some chuse to speak of him *via remotionis*; they consider the imperfections which are in the creatures, and remove them all from God as inconsistent with a Deity: Thus they say he is impeccable, impassible, immortal and the like; because to sin, to suffer, to die, are imperfections in the creature. This gives a negative discovery of him but falls far short of what he is. The holy Scriptures give us the most positive account of him, yet not according to his infinite perfections, no words can do that, but so as is most suitable to his nature, and our apprehensions. Thus we read
 John 4. 24. that God is a Spirit; God is Light; and
 1 John 1. 5. God is Love: Thus he is twice stiled in this Chapter; *viz.* in the 8th verse of it, and in the Text.

Quest. 1. You will say, *In what respects may this be spoken of God?*

Ans. 1. He is Love essentially: Hence he is not only said to be loving, but Love in the abstract: He is stiled by St. Paul
 2 Cor. 13. the God of Love; but the Text saith,
 11. *God is Love*, which shews it is essential to his

his Nature. Creatures may be loving, God only is Love. In creatures it is but an accident or quality, in God it is of a natural descent, of his substance and being. The Apostle saith, *God is Love*. Even as the Sun hath but one glorious brightness, & no colours, yet makes all other colours visible : So, though many things may help our apprehensions of God, (we call him just when he punisheth, true when he performs his promises, merciful and loving when he shews pity to them in misery,) yet God is but one entire perfection; *Quicquid in Deo, Deus est*; whatsoever is in God, is God.

2. He is Love causally : He is the efficient cause of all that which deserves the name of Love in the World : *Every good and perfect gift cometh down from above, from the Father of Lights*. If there be any love in our hearts to himself, it is the fruit of his Spirit; for naturally we are haters of God; our carnal minds are enmity against God; so St. Paul speaks. Love to God is not a Flower that grows in Natures Garden, but is a drop issuing from God the Fountain of Love : *We love him, because he loved us first*. It is a beam darted from that Sun, a reflexion of his Love to us. The same may be said of

Jam. I. 17.
Gal. 5. 22.
Rom. I 30.
Rom. 8. 7.

1 Joh. 4. 19.

Titus 3.3. true Love to Man; naturally we are hateful, and hating one another, as *St. Paul* saith: If there be a cordial affection, though but natural, it is from God, much more true Spiritual Love.

3. He is Love objectively: He is ought to be the chief object of our Love: As *David* calls God his joy, his exceeding joy, that is, the object of his joy; and his hope, that is, the object of his hope; so he is termed Love, because he is, and should be the chief object of the Christians Love. Christ calls his Church his Love, in the *Canticles*, because it is the object of his Love. Thus God is deservedly the object of the Love of Men and Angels, for he is altogether lovely. Whatever outward good men set up as the object of their Love, it is in God in a more high and transcendent way than can be in all creatures: Is it riches they affect? we read much of God's riches: *The Earth is full of thy riches*, says the Psalmist: We read in the Scriptures of the riches of his grace; the riches of his goodness; the riches of his glory; the riches of his mercy, and the like: Is it beauty they are taken with? God is more glorious than Angels, they cover their faces when they behold his brightness: Is it pleasure they set their

Psal. 43.4.
Psal. 38.

Cant. 5. 2.

Psa. 104. 24.
Eph. 1. 7.
Rom. 2. 5.
Phil. 4. 19.

their love upon? *In his presence is fulness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for ever more.* But to pass these. Psal. 16. ult.

4. God is Love declaratively: All his works are a declaratton of his Love: Some take the Text only in the first sense, that he is Love essentially; but others judge that the Apostle did not mean to puzzle us with abstruce and dark notions of God, but to instruct and teach us, to descend to our capacities, and to speak of that Love of God which is operative and communicative; and thus I take it here.

Qu. 2. You will then say, *How, and wherein hath God declared himself to be Love, that it may be clearly discerned?*

Ans. Whether we consider what God has done for Man, 1. In his Constitution; Or 2. In his Degeneracy; Or 3. In his Recovery and effectual Restitution; it will appear that God has made ample and large declarations of his Love.

1. Let us take a brief view of God's Love to Man in his natural Make and Constitution; and that both in his Body and Soul: His Body is fearfully & wonderfully made, and curiously wrought in the lowest part of the Earth, says the Psalmist. Psal. 139.] It's said of *Galen*, that famous Physician, and great Atheist, that upon the
serious

serious consideration of the admirable compoſure of it ; he brake forth into the acknowledgment of a Deity, and ſung an Hymn to his Creator.

The Head and Eyes are the highest members, to guide and govern the reſt that are inferiour, and the lowest to ſupport the highest, and in the miſt the hands to defend and maintain them all. But moſt eminently is God's Love ſeen in the faculties of man's Soul, in which he hath ſet up his Image, and Ingraven his own likenefs ; How beautiful was man in the day of his Creation ? There are 3 noble faculties, underſtanding, will, and conſcience, yet but one Soul, which ſome judge to be a ſhadow of God, where there is a Trinity of Perſons in an unity of eſſence : Others ſay the underſtanding repreſents God's Omnſcience : He knows all things ;

1 Joh.2.20. *And ye have an unction from the Holy One, ſaith St. John, and know all things.* In the will there is a ſhadow of God's Freedom and Sovereignty ; God is a free Agent, ſo is man's will, it hath a natural freedom to chuſe and reſuſe. Conſcience, ſay they, repreſents God as he is the ſearcher of hearts, and no reſpecter of perſons. Conſcience alſo in a man is the Candle of the
Pro. 20.27. Lord, and ſearcheth the inward parts of the

the belly : All, both high and low, rich and poor must hold up their hands at Consciences Bar. If no more be said, these things declare God's Love to Man in his original frame and constitution: Yet the provisions God has made both for Body and Soul, speak this more fully ; for the Body he hath provided food, raiment, and rest : The day for man to work in, and the night to rest in : For the Soul, Arts and Sciences : He hath given all men the Book of the Creatures to read, and many good Lessons may be learned out of them ; *For the Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his handy-work.* Man is Lord of all visible creatures, as *David* shews largely in the 8th *Psalms*. The Beasts are subject to man, yea, the very Angels themselves are ministring Spirits ; and though by the sin of *Adam*, man's dominion over the creatures was abated, yet God renewed this Charter again unto *Noah*, and to his posterity, as is to be seen in the 9th of *Genesis*. And though wicked men have no right as Sons, yet as Servants they have, and so have dominion over the creatures. Add to all this, God's great Love in giving speech to man, and ability to use it ; a favour seldom taken notice of,

Psal 19. 1.

Heb. 1. ult.

Psal. 57.8.

of, because common, yet *David* call it his glory; *Awake O my glory*, says he, meaning his Tongue; it's that which makes all our glory to appear; Man does very little excel Beasts but in reason and in speech: Beasts have voices, but not speech: *Balaam's* Ass speaking with man's voice, was extraordinary and miraculous: Some creatures by industry may be taught to utter words, but though they have the materiality, yet not the formality of speech, wanting reason wherewith to utter their speech. A man is known by his speech, as a vessel when we knock it is known to be full or empty. I have read of a Philosopher, who at a Feast observing a young man not to utter a word, said to him, *If thou beest a fool, thou dost wisely, but if thou beest a wise man, thou dost foolishly.* By all these things God's Love is declared to Man in his Primitive Constitution.

2. Let us consider Man in his Apostacy and Degeneration, and we shall yet see greater declarations and manifestations of God's Love toward him. God is not easily provoked, though sin is the only thing that is the object of his utter detestation, and so the only provocation of his displeasure; yet he is slow to anger,
full

full of patience and forbearance ; yea, of Rom. 2. 5.
 great kindness to those who go on still in
 their trespasses: He does good to them,
 who are always doing evil against him:
 He makes his Sun to shine, and his Rain Mat. 5. 45.
 to fall upon the bad and the unjust: He
 daily loadeth men with his benefits: And
 if he be provoked, he is not willing to
 execute his wrath upon men: He is loth
 to punish: *He doth not willing afflict nor* Lam. 3. 23.
grieve the Children of men. Hence are those
 conflicts in himself. *How shall I give thee*
up Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee Israel?
How shall I make thee as Admah? How Hos. 11. 8.
shall I set thee as Zeboim? my bowels are
turned within me, my repentings are kindled
together. Here are strivings between
 mercy and justice, till at last mercy gets
 the victory, and rejoyceth against Judg-
 ment: And if acts of justice at any time
 appear, yet he allays and tempers them
 with mercy: Heaven is all mercy, and
 Hell is all misery; but here in this world
 the most bitter Cup of Affliction hath
 some grains of mercy in it: Hence the
 Church saith, *It is of the Lords mercies we* Lam. 3. 22.
are not consumed; yet then terrible Judg-
 ments of God were upon them: His acts
 of justice are not so extensive as those of
 his mercy are, as is evident by what he
 declares

declares in the second Commandment ; where he saith, *He will visit the iniquity of the Parents upon the Children, unto the third and fourth Generation of them that hate him, but will shew mercy to thousands of them that love him, and keep his Commandments.* Nor are

Mich. 7.

18.

Isa. 28. 21.

Isa. 27. 8.

Isa. 57. 16.

they so pleasant to him ; for he delighteth to shew mercy, but judgment is his strange work, with which he desires not to be so much acquainted. Nor are they so permanent as the acts of his Love and

Mercy are : *In measure he debateth, and stays his rough wind in the day of the East-*

wind : He will not contend for ever, nor be always wroth, lest the spirit fail before him, and the soul that he hath made : But his mercy is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him. Yea, the end of God

in afflicting, is to manifest his Love : He is angry, that he may love ; angry a little, that men repenting, he may love them for ever : What excellent declarations of God's Love are these to the degenerate Sons of Men ? yet as if all this were but a small matter, there are yet greater operations of it. Above all things, the Incarnation of his Son Jesus Christ, doth most eminently manifest the Love of God to the Sons of Men, and demonstrates that he is Love it self : *Herein is love, not*

1 Joh. 4. 9,
10.

that

that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his only begotten Son into the world, to be a Propitiation for our sins, that we might live through him. I speak of the common interest of all men in it: It was brought to pass by God for to make his love to men appear: He so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, &c. And Christ came and died in our nature for the world of Mankind, and not for the lapsed Angels: Which of the Angels can say, *To us a Child is born, to us a Son is given?* He took not on him the nature of Angels, but the seed of *Abraham*. The good Angels need no pardon, the bad Angels are excluded from it, and Man only hath a Saviour provided for him, and offered to him in the Gospel upon terms highly just, equal and reasonable. Look at the Angels in themselves, and they are noble. Gold and Silver are the Monarchs of the world, as one styles them; Brass and Copper the Gentry, but Lead and Iron are the Refuse of the world: What hath Iron in it? Of how mean a colour is it? yet the Loadstone refuseth all other metals, and attracts the Iron to its self: Thus the Angels are excellent and glorious creatures, Gold and Silver, as it were, in comparison of Man; yet Christ took not the

John 3.16.

Heb.2.16.

the Angelical, but the Humane Nature how full of Astonishment is this? And all flowed from the Love of God to Man. And what strange passages do concur in the work of Man's Redemption? All was done by the death of the Lord of Life he was in poverty, that men might be made rich, and died, that they might live who believe in him: He was wounded that they might be healed, and bare the curse, that they might have the blessing and all this from the Fountain of Divine

† Joh. 2.2.

Love: *God so loved the world, so admirably, so unspeakably, so inconceivably, none but himself can tell how, that he gave his Son to be a Propitiation for the sins of the whole world:* And Christ so loved Men that he gave himself to death for them and what had he more to give? It is the nature of Love so to do; where Divine Love is in any height or perfection, though it be but in a creature, it brings an extasie, it makes that creature go out of itself, deny it self, neglect its own profit and pleasure, and seek the Glory of God and to be taken up wholly in the Service of God: This Love was perfect in Christ and this made him empty himself, and lay aside his Majesty and Glory for the good of them he loved: Here's Divine Love

Love to the height, and in its perfection, and may bring to an extasie; for the Love is such a Mine, as is too deep and rich for any creature to fathom, or count the value of it; yet this the Love of God hath contrived and effected for Man: And, whereas some make an ill use of this Love, to overthrow Christ's satisfaction; If God, say they, so loved Man, as to give his Son for him, then he was not angry with him, and if not angry, then there was no need at all of a satisfaction to be made for him: Though Love and Hatred (that I may briefly answer it) are inconsistencies, yet Love and Anger may well stand together: *He gave his Son*; there was great love; *It pleased the Father to* Isa. 53. *wound him, and bruise him for our iniquities*; there was great wrath. God's wrath was kindled against *Job's Friends*, yet in love he directs them to atone him by a Sacrifice: God could not but be angry at the sin of the World, and yet in love gave his Son to be a Propitiatory Sacrifice for sin. Oh the vast immense Love of God to fallen Man in this particular! Unto all this, let me yet add one demonstration of God's Love to fallen Man, which is manifest in giving his Word unto him, both Law and Gospel, which is made known at

B one

Ezek. 33.

11.

1 Tim. 2.4.

one time or other, unto all Nations. Where the Gospel comes, all men have the offers of Life and Eternal Salvation by Jesus Christ, with God's earnest and most hearty desires and entreaties to accept the same: He declares therein, that he takes no pleasure in the death of sinners, but would have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the Truth. He is troubled and grieved when men slight and neglect the tenders of Peace made to them.

Obj. Some will say, *Why doth God then permit so many to perish, even the most of Mankind, and to lie for ever under his wrath? How can this stand with such Love as God declares to the Sons of Men?*

Ans. God's Love and Justice are not inconsistent, but can, and do stand well together: His Justice takes place upon those who despise the riches of his Grace and Love: He might have stood upon the first terms made with Adam: The terms of that Old Covenant were just and righteous: All his Posterity were concerned therein, to stand or fall in him. He sinned, and so brought sin and death upon all the World of Mankind: By

Rom. 5.12. *man sin entred into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that*

all have sinned. Here God might have stood upon it, and have held all men to the terms of the first Covenant, which was death upon the first transgression, and these terms he might have prosecuted to the utter destruction of all men: He was not bound to make new ones; yet this he hath graciously done, and made a new Covenant, his own Son a second *Adam*, the Head and Mediator of this Covenant: He is freely offered and tendered in the Gospel to the Sons of Men, *That whosoever* Jam. 3. 16. *believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.* If men refuse and reject the tenders of Salvation, as the most do, their destruction is of themselves; and the Love of God appears more in saving the remnant that believe, than any severity in destroying the rest; especially considering, he is not the cause of their sin, but is grieved that they will not accept Life upon Gospel-terms. This is evident in his weeping over *Jerusalem*, saying, *If* Luk. 19 41. *thou at least in this thy day hadst known the things that belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine Eyes.* So that every mans destruction is of himself, because men will not come to Christ that they might have Life, but refuse him that speaks from Heaven, and neglect great Salvation. This

Hos. 13. 9.
Joh. 5. 40.
Heb. 2. 3.

is written in legible Characters, that he that runs may read the Love of God towards degenerate, fallen Man. That's the second declaration of it.

3. Let us look upon Man in his actual and effectual Recovery and Restitution; and here we shall see yet further and more eminent manifestations of God's Love unto those that are his own in the World: He hath declared greatly his Love to all Mankind, yet much higher Love is in him to all true Christians. 'Tis said, Christ looked upon the young man in the Gospel, and loved him. We also find it recorded, that he loved *Martha*, and *Mary*, & *Lazarus*: Of this last, they went to Jesus and said, *Behold, he whom thou lovest is sick?* and this was such, as others observed it: For Jesus weeping at his grave, they said, *Behold how he loved him.* And I doubt not but it was a far higher and more endeared Love, than what he had for the young man; who, it's evident, loved the World more than Christ, and esteemed earthly Treasure above heavenly. To make this Love of God more apparent, let us consider the Properties thereof. This Love is great, comprehensive, free, distinguishing, excellent, satisfying and everlasting.

1. It is a great and transcendent Love which

Matth. 19.

John 11. 3,
5, 36.

which God hath declared unto his People. *God, who is rich in mercy, saith Saint Paul, for the great love wherewith he loved us.* He is a great God, and his Love is like himself, a great Love: 'Tis great above humane expressions, yet some can speak great words. When *St. Paul* was in his Visions, he was caught up into Heaven, and heard things unutterable. We read of joy unspeakable; such is the Love of God to his Servants, the best and greatest words are too weak to declare it; yea, it's greater than the largest apprehensions of Men and Angels can reach. This Love of God is like the Peace of God, which *St. Paul* saith, passeth all understanding. Hence we find that the four dimensions, by which men take an estimate of corporeal greatness, are given to this Love. We read of the breadth, and length, and height, and depth of this Love; the very same which are ascribed to God, to declare the greatness of his perfection; which is said to be as high as Heaven, deeper than Hell, longer than the Earth, and broader than the Sea: But I would speak of it comparatively, and so amplify the greatness of this Love. The Love of one creature to another is very great: That between *David* and *Jonathan* was great, and

Eph. 2. 4.

2 Cor. 12.

1 Pet. 1. 8.

Phil. 4. 7.

Eph. 3. 18, 19.

Job 11. 7, 8, 9.

2 Sam. 1. 26.

and wonderful, even passing the Love of Women; either of one Woman to another, or of an affectionate Mother to her only Son, or of a loving Wife to her dearest Husband: But what is *David's* Love, or the Love of all creatures to God's Love? The one is but finite, the other infinite: Compare it with the Love of good men unto God; some have had great affections this way; as *David, I love thee dearly*, says he, *O Lord, my strength*. But here is a vast disproportion: If all the Love that ever have been, now is, and ever shall be in all the Saints, were in one mans heart, it would be a great Love to God, yet far short of that in God to them. Let us compare it with the Love of God to other objects; he loves all his creatures, as such; yet Man above all inferior creatures: The Angels by Creation had more Love than Man; and he loves Christ yet more than all. Now his Love to his People is greater than all these, except the last; and though Christ is the more adæquate object of God's Love, and so hath higher measures of it than Believers are capable of, yet he loves them with the same Love for quality and kind, that he loves Christ with. This we learn from Christ himself in his solemn Prayer,

faith the Lord to *Israel*, and thou becamest
mine, and this was the time of Love. This
 is reconciling Love, which is nothing but
 a redintegration, or renewing of broken
 friendship between God and us: Sin
 makes the breach, and God's Love makes
 it up: Hence comes *Abraham* a Heathen
 and an Enemy, to be called the Friend of
 God: Herein has God commended his
 Love, that his People, when Enemies,
 were reconciled by the death of his Son.
 Into such friendship hath this Love
 brought them, as the secrets of God are
 revealed to them: *Shall I hide from Abra-*
ham, says God, *the thing that I will do?*
 Thus Christ called his Disciples Friends;
 For, says he, *Whatsoever I have heard of my*
Father, I have made known unto you. There
 is also *amor beneficentia*, the Love of Be-
 neficence; his heart opens his hand to
 do them good, even beyond all the good
 of this World. He loves them, therefore
 he gives his Son for them, and to them,
 and into them, that he may live in them,
 and they live through him. It is this Love
 that gives them the remission of their sins:
He hath loved them, and washed them from
their sins in his own blood: 'Tis this Love
 that confers Adopting grace: Behold, what
 manner of love the Father hath bestowed
 upon

upon us, that we should be called the Sons of
 God. It is this Love that moves him to
 comfort them: *He hath loved us, saies St.*
Paul, and given us everlasting consolation;
 If not alwaies the sense of comfort, yet
 firm and sure grounds of strong and dura-
 ble consolation: Once more, There is
 also *amor complacentia*, a Love of compla-
 cency and delight God hath in his People,
 which is the highest act or degree of
 Love: All his delight is in his Saints,
 that are in the earth: His Truth, his
 Worship, and his People are all he hath
 any great delight in here in this World:
 To a contrite Christian, that trembles at
 his word, he looks with an eye of grea-
 ter complacency, than to Heaven and
 Earth. That's the second property.
 3. It is free Love: Absolutely, per-
 fectly free. *I will Love them freely,* saith
 God by the Prophet *Hosea*. If he did
 not love freely, he could not love at all,
 such vile Creatures as we are; There is
 no cause of his Love, but his Love: The
 Lord did not set his Love upon *Israel*,
 because they were more in number than
 any other People, but because he loved
 them. Free it is in every sense and re-
 spect; There was no want of us, or of
 our services; For he is alufficient, and
 what

2 Thes. 2.
16.

Psal. 16. 3.

Isa. 66. 2.

Hos. 14. 4.

Deut. 77. 8.

Isa. 40. 15.
17.

Rom. 5. 8.

what want can be to him that is infinite to whom there can be nothing added. The Sea, though a vast Ocean, yet became finite, is capable of addition and diminution; but what can be added to infinity, which comprehends all things within it self? *Behold, he taketh up the Isles as a very little thing, the Nations before him as a drop of a bucket, as the small dust of a ballance:* All Nations are counted to him as nothing, less than nothing and vanity. His Love therefore is not a love of indulgence, but of redundance, flowing out freely: Also it was without purchase or merit on his Peoples part, and in this sense free: They have not enough to purchase the least outward mercy, much less special Love; it's bestowed *gratis*, without money and without price: Even the merit and blood of Christ did not purchase the Love of Benevolence; but the Love was the cause of Christ's coming and of all he did and suffered: *God commended his love to us, because when we were sinners, Christ died for us,* saith St. Paul. We have demerit enough to draw on the wrath and hatred of God, but nothing to be an attractive of his Love: It is free also, because given without grudging. God loves his people with all his heart

and with all his soul, and he upbraids Jer. 31. 41.
 not. Free also it is, because without con-
 straint: None could impose upon God in
 this matter; he could have withheld it,
 and denied it for ever, and none could
 compel him to set his love upon them. In
 a word, It is free Love, because it can re-
 ceive no compensation from them who
 are the objects of it. Can a man be pro-
 fitable to the Almighty, as a man may be Job 22. 3.
 profitable unto himself? This the Lord
 foresaw, and yet loves them.

4. It is a very peculiar, distinguishing
 Love: This is declared in those saving
 mercies he bestows upon them, and denies
 to others, though they to whom they are
 denied, fall under the same external cir-
 cumstances, (if not greater sometimes,)
 with those to whom they are given. A
 full instance of this we have in *Jacob* and
Esau: Was not *Esau* *Jacob's* Brother, saith Mal. 1. 2.
 the Lord? yet *I have loved Jacob, and I have*
hated Esau. Not that God who is Love,
 did or could hate the person of *Esau*, ab-
 stractly considered; he loves the person
 he made, and hates the sin he never made:
 He is said to hate the workers of iniqui-
 ty, but it is for their works sake: But
 here in the Prophet, it is to be taken for
 a less degree of love, which is often called
 hatred

- Gen. 29.31. hated in the Scriptures : 'Tis said, *Jacob* hated *Leah* ; it's meant comparatively, he loved her with a less degree of love than *Rachel*. So it is said, He that hateth not Father and Mother, &c. yea, and his own life also, cannot be Christ's Disciple. In other Scriptures we are commanded to love these relations, and to preserve our lives, and therefore 'tis to be understood of a lower degree of love : In comparison of our love to Christ, our love to things here below, should be rather a kind of hatred than love : Thus God loved *Jacob* with such a transcendent, peculiar, distinguishing Love, as in comparison he is said to hate *Esau* : His Love to *Jacob* was manifested in bestowing peculiar favours upon him, whereas *Esau* had only common mercies : He could say, *I have enough*, but *Jacob* said, *I have all*. God passed a gracious decree and purpose upon *Jacob*, which he did not upon *Esau*, as St. Paul testifies : The Children not being yet born, neither having done good or evil, that the purpose of God according to Election might stand, he said, *The elder shall serve the younger*, as it is written, *Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated*. God appeared to *Jacob*, and established his Covenant with him ; the
- Luk. 14. 26.
- Rom. 9.11, 12, 13.
- Gen. 28.22, 13.

He did not to or with *Esau* : He made *Gen. 32.28.*
Jacob a Prince with himself, and gave *Hof. 12. 4.*
him by prayers & tears to overcome him :
Of a wrestling *Jacob*, he became a prevail-
ing *Israel* ; this he gave not to *Esau* : And
though *Esau* had another name given him,
yet it was a worse ; *Edom*, which signi-
fies red, because of his red hairy com-
plexion, as some think, or because of the
red Pottage he desired, and for it sold
his birth-right, as others judge : But this
signifies not so well as *Esa*, which imports
protection : But *Jacob* is yet much more
excellent. In a word, *Jacob* had a very
gracious and favourable spirit : We read,
when his Brother asked him who his
Children were, he answered, *These are*
the Children whom the Lord hath graciously
given thy Servant : We find no such fa-
vourable expressions fall from *Esa* : What
distinguishing love is there in all these
passages? which will appear yet more
fully, if we consider that *Esa* was upon
even ground with *Jacob* in outward pri-
vileges, and in some above him. They *Rom. 9. 10.*
both descended from the same Parents ;
both under the Seal of the Covenant,
Circumcision ; both had Education in
the same Family ; and herein *Esa* ex-
celled, that he was the first-born, and the *Gen. 25.*
beloved

beloved Son of his good Father *How* yet, saith the Lord, Jacob *have I loved*, Esau *have I hated*. O what wonderful peculiar distinguishing love is here! This is the Love of God to all his People, two that lie in the same womb, brought up in the same family, the one taken, the other left; the one beloved, the other not.

5. It is an excellent and precious Love even to admiration. *How excellent* (precious, as it is in the Margin of *ye* Psal. 36. 7. Bibles) *is thy loving kindness, O God!* So the Psalmist. Some think he speaks of Gods general loving kindness, and if so then the argument is the stronger; How much more excellent is his love to his own people? When a man does well, we commend him; if he does eminently, we extol him; but if his actions be super eminent, then we admire him. Such is the love of God, not only good, as *David* saith; Thy loving kindness is good, but excellent, yea, even to wonderment. *How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God!* Compare it with other things that men esteem precious, and we shall see this true. *Who* is one of the most excellent creatures in the world, God, yet the experience the *Spouse* had of this love of God, caused her to

Thy love is better than Wine. The love of Cant. 1.
 Christ manifested in his Ordinances, is as
 a feast of fat things, as Wine on the lees Isa. 25. 6.
 well refined. Let but their Souls enjoy
 communion with him, and they have a
 more abundant sweetness, than in the
 choicest pleasures of this World. Wine Psal. 104.
 makes glad the natural heart of man, 15.
 therefore it is said, *Give Wine to them that* Prov. 30.
are of a heavy heart. But the Love of God 6, 7.
 shed abroad into the heart, makes glad
 even the very Soul of man. Wine may
 revive and restore the natural Spirits, but
 his love restoreth the Soul, and makes
 believers forget terrors of conscience, and
 agonies of Spirit, & remember their mis-
 ery no more. What should I speak of Wine,
 which is but one help to nature? Life is
 the most excellent good in nature, and
 the most desirable mercy. When God
 calls *Baruch* that he will give him his life Jer. 45.
 for a prey, he implies, that it is the
 greatest outward good, and therefore
 made the matter of a promise. He knew
 the worth of it, who said, *Skin for Skin,* Job 2. 4.
and all a man hath will he give for his life.
 Yet the Psalmist declares the loving kind- Psal. 63. 3.
 ness of God to be better than life. These
 words are variously read. Some thus;
Melior est quam virorum; Thy loving kind-
 ness

ness is better than the love of men. Their favour many times is a snare, and sometimes a mischief. Gods Love is alwaies beneficial, yea, 'tis beatifical. *Sapientia*, say others; who understand it the conditions of life men choose themselves; As we commonly say, such live a Husbandmans life, a Scholars life or a Souldiers life; Take which of these lives you please, or take them together and all of the like nature that you can add to them, and the love of God is better than all those lives, with all their accommodations. Take it as most usually it is for mans natural life; which is the best and most excellent natural good, & so we read. To him that is joyned to all the living there is hope, *For a living Dog is better than a dead Lion.* We read also that Eccles. 9.4. the Philosopher preferred the least Fly upon this account, that it hath life, to the Sun, which though far more glorious, yet it is inanimate, and without life; But notwithstanding all this, the loving kindness of God is a more excellent good better than life it self; for it brings nearer to God; *In thy favour is life,* said David, even eternal life: It is this Love that makes life desirable and pleasant: Psal. 30. 5. is not worth the while to live in the World.

World, only to enjoy sensual pleasures, and worldly profits, which are but for a season, and perish in the using: Now, *Quod efficit tale, magis est tale*; that which makes life delightful, must needs be more pleasant it self: This was it which made *David* the more thankful to God for restoring his health, and sparing his life, even because of the Love of God with which his life was crowned: Bless the Lord, O my Soul, saith he, and forget not all his benefits; who redeemed my life from destruction, and crowned me with loving kindness and tender mercies. In a word, natural life is not so far good, but it may be apprehended *sub ratione mali*, as an evil, and this not only by *Achitophel*, *Judas*, and all such who destroy their own lives, but even by very holy men, as *Elijah*, *Job*, *Jonah*, and others, who have petitioned the Lord very earnestly, either through slavish fear, or pressing afflictions, or sinful impatience, that they might die, that God would take away their lives, and the like expressions; *I am weary of my life*, says *Rebecca*, because of the Daughters of Heth. If *Jacob* take a Wife of them, what good will my life do me? But none ever was known to put up such prayers, or make such complaints, touching the Love

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of

Psal. 103.
2, 4.

Gen. 27.46.

of God : None ever said thus, or to the effect, Lord, take away thy Love from me ; or, Lord, I am weary of thy loving kindness, and if such and such crosses befall me, what good shall thy Love do me. No, no ; the Saints know that this is the life of their lives, the joy of their hearts, their greatest comfort at all times, and their only support in evil times. This is the fifth.

6. The Love of God is a satisfying Love ; it is satisfying both to God and good men : To God, who is said to rest in his Love ; he stays himself upon his Love, being every way self-sufficient : *Zeph. 3. 17.* *Mat. 3. 17.* is said to be well pleased in his Son, to center, acquiesce, or rest in him. God is also said to rest in his Sabbaths, and to rest in his Church and People : *Of Sion* *Psal. 132.* hath said, *This is my rest for ever ; yet ultimately, he doth rest in his Love ; this is fully satisfying to his heart : There is nothing external that he can rest in ; either he must rest in his Love, or be left without any hope of rest, which cannot possibly befall him : It is also that which gives all good men full satisfaction, at all times, and in all things ; though they have all outward things they can desire, yet if he withdraws but the sense of Love*

God's Love to Mankind.

31

Love, they are troubled, disquieted, and cannot rest, as you see in the Spouse: Cant. 3.
Cant. 5.
But when they enjoy this, they can say, they have enough, they are satisfied: *Shew John 14. 8.*
us the Father, said they, and it sufficeth. It supplies all wants, it fills up all conditions: Let them have the clear apprehensions, and sensible fruitions of this Love, and this will give them better content and satisfaction, than all the World can do in the want thereof. Here men are spending their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfieth not; Verily, there is more solid satisfaction in the enjoyment of this Love, than the quintessence of all earthly contentments, if extracted, are able to afford: As to other things, that of Solomon is true, *The Eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the Ear with hearing; nor yet the heart with enjoying; but they who share in this Love of God, may well sit down and rest themselves, saying, The* Isa. 55. 2.
Eccles. 1. 8.
lines are fallen to us in pleasant places, yea, we have a goodly heritage. The Scripture Psal. 16. 6.
Eccl. 5. 10.
assures us, *That he that loveth silver, shall not be satisfied with silver, nor he that loveth abundance with increase:* But he that has a part and lot in this Love, may say as the good old Patriarch did in another case,

Gen. 43. 48. *It is enough, that my Son Joseph is yet alive*
 so, it is enough that I enjoy the Love
 God, may a Christian say; I rest where
 God resteth, I am satisfied where he
 ultimately satisfied even in his own Love
 and I can desire no more; I hunger and
 thirst after no other thing. *Better is*
dinner of green herbs, with God's Love
 Pro. 13. 17. *than a stalled Ox, and his hatred therewith*

7. The Love of God to his own, is
 everlasting love; it is a love that reach
 from one eternity unto another: Th
 Psal. 90. 2. Psalmist says thus, *From everlasting*
everlasting thou art God: Let me say, From
 everlasting to everlasting God is Love
 and that not in his Nature and Essence
 only, but in his works and manifestation
 to all true Believers. (1.) It is from eve
 lasting; it is no novel thing, of yeste
 day, but an ancient love, as ancient as th
 Ancient of days: *The Lord appeared to*
 Jer. 31. 1. *of old, says Jeremiah the Prophet, saying*
I have loved thee with an everlasting love
 And when Christ prayed that the Father
 would grant his requests about the unio
 he desired between himself and Believer
 and between Believers each with othe
 his end was, that the World might kno
 that the Father had loved them, as
 loved him; How was that? even from
 ev

everlasting. For, says he, *thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world,* that is, from everlasting: The love of his Saints unto him is but of yesterday, if their life and love had began together; but many are long in the World before they have any affections towards him: Every one give him not the kindness of youth, but too many may with grief of heart lament, as that excellent man Saint *Austin* is said to have done, *Nimis serò te amavi, Domine*: Lord, it was too late when I loved thee. But his love to them was as early as eternity it self. (2.) It is also unto everlasting; it is of the same nature with himself, unchangable; *Having loved his own,* which were in the World, *he loved them unto the end.* His mercy is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him. It must needs be so, for it is supported by everlasting Pillars, viz. the merit of Christ, in whom is everlasting Righteousness; the New Covenant, which is durable, even an everlasting Covenant: The Power of God, in whom is everlasting strength: The relation between God and them; he is their everlasting Father: The way in which all good men desire to walk, is of the same nature; *Lead me,* saith David,

Joh. 13. 1.

Psal. 103.

17.

Dan. 9. 24.

Isa. 55. 3.

Isa. 26. 4.

Isa. 9. 6.

Psal. 139.

24.

2 Sam. 13.
15.

Rom. 8.35,
39.

Isa. 54.

Rev. 3. 19.

Psal. 98. 32,
33.

Pro. 13.24.

in the way everlasting. The love of creatures quickly fades and fails; at the further their loves and their lives perish together it may be before death. 'Tis said of *Amnon*, that after he had defiled his Sister *Tamar*, the hatred wherewith he hated her, was more than the love wherewith he loved her; but at death, their love dies with them; but death cannot separate from the Love of God, and Christ. *The Mountains shall be removed, and the Hills be removed*; not only natural, but even those metaphoric Mountains of desertion, temptation and corruption, shall be removed, which may and often do take away the sensible manifestations of this Love from Believers; but the Love abides for ever; God's kindness shall never depart, nor the Covenant of his Peace be dissolved: He may sharply rebuke and chasten them, yet dearly and constantly love them: *Whom the Lord loves, he rebukes and chastens*: He has said *He will visit their iniquity with a rod, and their transgression with stripes*; yet he adds *my loving kindness will I not take from them nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.* Amongst men it is true, *He that spareth the Rod, hateth the Child, but he that loveth him, chasteneth him betimes.* The Rod of affliction is the fruit of God's affection, and the affection

affection will not suffer him to do any thing but what he knows is for their good. *It is good for me, says David, that I was afflicted :* So *Israel* went into captivity for their good ; *You thought evil, says Joseph,* but *God meant it unto good.* Even our Lord *Jesus Christ*, who was the Son of his Father's love, yet under the sense of his Father's displeasure : Much more may Believers expect this. *He whom thou lovest is sick,* said they to Christ, when *Lazarus* lay sick. So when God suffered Enemies to carry *Israel* captive, says the Prophet, *Thou hast given the dearly beloved of thy Soul into the hands of their Enemies.* Great affections and great afflictions are not inconsistent : Men may be under temporal dispensations of outward mercies, yet be in their sins, and so under the hatred of God : Thus on the other hand, men may lie under great and many troubles, and yet be the objects of God's eternal Love, as *Job*, and many others have found by their experience : He will not have us know love or hatred by what is before us, but rather by what is within us ; not by our outward condition, but by our inward disposition, by his holy operations in us and upon us ; If these be in us, we are the objects of his Love, and if once so,

Psa. 119.

Gen. 50.20.

Joh. 11.3.

Jer. 12.7.

Eccles. 9.2.

it is ever so; he does not love, and then afterwards hate; but his Love is everlasting, like himself, yea, it is himself, for *God is love.*--- Now follows the practical Application of this Truth.

Use 1. If things be thus, That God has declared such Love to the Sons of Men and to his own, Then here we may take up matter of Admiration, and say, *Lord, What is man that thou shouldest magnify him, and set thy heart upon him?* Take Man in his Constitution, and so he proceeds from nothing; take him in comparison with God, and so he is less than nothing, and vanity; take him in his degeneration, and so he is worse than nothing; consider him in his restoration, and so he amounts to nothing; *I am not behind the chiefest Apostles,* says St. Paul, *though I do nothing.* Now for God to publish his Love at the rate he has done, to such persons as these, may it not amaze, and call out the utmost wonderment both of Men and Angels? What may or can do it, if not this? It was the expression of that holy man, *Lord, What is man that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment?* He admired God should spend a Rod upon Man in order to his good. How much more then may this raise

Job 7. 17.

Isa. 40. 15.

Job 7. 17,
18.

wonderment, that he should set his love thus upon him? May we not say, Is this after the manner of men, O Lord God? As *David* in another case said. Let our hearts be enlarged in a holy admiration of this Love of God, and of this God who is love it self.

Use 2. How much doth it concern us to see whether we have our part in the peculiar love of God: all men share in his common goodness, few have interest in his special, and distinguishing love: Now the stress of this discerning the love of God, lies upon the Holy Ghost: He only can give the full assurance, and sense of this love to a particular Soul: Hence we read of the Love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. This holy Spirit is acquainted with the heart and mind of God, and does infallibly know those upon whom his love is set, and he only can display the banner of love so, as to work up the heart of any to a secret perswasion of an interest in it. Let us therefore above all things wait and pray for the witnessings of the Spirit. Yet for our help in this matter, let me say, that this love is discernable sometimes (especially when the Soul is free from Clouds of passion, fears and darkness) even by the

Rom. 5. 5.

the effects of it upon the heart and life. The least sincere love to him, is an evidence he hath looked in upon our Souls and loved us. *We love him, saith the Apostle, because he loved us first.* Our love to him is a beam of his love to us reflected back upon himself. Now our love is discerned by our apprehensions of God and by our affections to all that is related unto God; by our love to his Son, to his house, to his commands, to his Servants and unto all that bear his Image: In word, if every dispensation of God draw us more after God, it is as comfortable a symptom of Gods love to us, as I can find in all the Scripture. *I drew them, saies the God of Israel, with cords of love.* And again he saith, *I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.* If God gives in of himself in any duty, the Soul is thankful; if he withholds and answers not, the Soul is more humble before him, and mournful after him; Not as *Saul*, who when God answered him not presently, went away to the Witch of *Endor*; nor like him who said. *Why should I wait for the Lord any longer?* But as one resolved to lye at his foot, hoping, and quietly waiting for the Salvation of the Lord. If God gives

1 Joh. 4. 19.

Hos. 11. 4.

Jer. 31. 3.

1 Sam. 28.

2 Kings 6.

33.

gives outward comforts, and the Soul is not proud under them, but is more vile in its own eyes, less than the least of all mercies; and if he denies these things, that the Fig-tree blossom not, &c. yet it can rejoyce in the Lord alone: If he gives any sensible manifestation of himself, the the Soul rejoyceth with trembling; if he hides his face, yet it follows him when it cannot see him, it will serve him; if it cannot enjoy him, yet it will obey him: Thus to be drawen nearer to God by every carriage of his to us, as the Woman of *Canaan* was, is a good sign *Matth. 15.* he has loved us with an everlasting love.

Use 3. This Doctrine is a Spring of strong consolation, especially to you who share in the peculiar love of God: If he loves, no matter who hates: The Princes love will more than countervail the Courtiers envy: 'Tis said, that when *Josephs* Brethren saw that *Israel* loved *Joseph* *Gen. 37.34* more than all his children, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him. Thus it is often with Gods Children: The World will hate them, even because God loves them; Yea, it may be, for this they may lose the love of their natural Relations; but set this fountain against the want

Deut. 23.
4, 5.

want of the streams, and Gods love will do you more good, than the hatred of men and Divels can do you hurt. Further, if God loves, nothing can be wanting that is good for us, for love is bountiful; He loves his people from the Pit, he loves grace into them, and will love them into heaven at last: If he loves he does all things in love, every bitter pill is rolled up in this Sugar; if he loves, he makes all things work for good. When *Balaam* attempted to curse *Israel*, 'tis said, *The Lord thy God would not hearken to him, but turned the curse into a Blessing, because the Lord thy God loved thee; out of the eater comes meat, and out of the strong sweetness*: How comfortable is the condition of all those who are the objects of special divine love? What hath been spoken about this love should allay all objections about it. Say not, I can see no reason why God should love me, and I cannot be comforted: For the reason of his love is in and from himself. It is a piece of his Sovereignty to love freely. Say not, I have walked unworthy of this love, I have sinned against and after choice manifestations of this love. For though this is ground of great humiliation, yet not of discouragement; un-

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worthiness did not hinder him from placing his love upon you at first, nor can it hinder the continuance of it now, for he knew and foresaw what thou wouldest be and do. *I know that thou wouldest deal* Isa. 18. 8.
treacherously, saies the Lord to *Israel* by *Esay*. Yet he hath set his love upon thee; and therefore though he may inflict fatherly chastisements upon thee, yet he will not take away his fatherly affections from thee. For his love is an everlasting love. Neither let any say, God hides his face from me, how can I think he loves me? For did he not desert Christ, and yet loved him very dearly at that time? *David* frowned upon *Absalom*, and banished him from his presence a great while, yet 'tis said, *Joab perceived that the heart* 2 Sam. 14. 1.
of David was towards Absalom. God may alter the shew of his countenance, but his heart is not changed, his love is still towards thee.

Use. 4. Let it be of Exhortation, in a few particulars.

1. This calls upon all to seek for a part and interest in the peculiar love of God. His common love is not enough to make us happy. He gives it, that we might be tempted to look after his special love. The time will come when there will be an

Matth. 25.

an end of all the common love of God that's no everlasting love, it continueth at longest but while life lasteth; if we miss of this peculiar love, we have lost all the common love, and for want of Covenant-love must lye down under infinite hatred and displeasure of God ever and ever; Oh tremble and be afraid of neglecting to secure your part in the distinguishing love of God! Know that this love is not a sealed fountain, but is free to all that will believe in Christ, obey the Gospel, whatever their sins have been: Let none despair of having their part herein; This cuts off all endeavour after it. Let this text settle good thoughts of God in every ones heart: He that judged God a hard Master, hid his talent. I know no better antidote against despondency than this text. Come in and accept of this love in the way of the Gospel, and he will pardon all thy sins, it is given notwithstanding all the vileness of the creature; This Great and excellent love may be had freely, O beg, cry mightily, give the Lord no rest till you have your interest in it. When one heard of the love that was between two very intimate friends, he cried out, *O utinam tertius esset*. O that I were a third, that I might share

will

with them in their great love ! You have heard of the great love of God to believers. Be in a flame, and burn with desires to share in this love of God. Every one is ambitious of the love of great ones: Many seek the Rulers favour, Pro. 29.26. though sometimes it proves a snare, if not a mischief. But behold, here is a Ruler whose favour was never sought in vain, if sought in time ; and which always proves beneficial; yea, beatifical : What will the love of Friends and Relations profit us ? what will the love of all the World advantage us without this excellent, satisfying, comprehensive, and eternal love of God ? *Luther* is reported to say, God should not put him off with these things. And if all the honour the King put upon *Haman*, could not content him without *Mordecai's* bow, much less should expressions of common love from God satisfy our Souls, but we should daily put up *Dauids* request, Remember us O Lord with the favour thou bearest unto thy people. Psal. 106. That's the first Exhortation. 4.

2. Let none abuse this text and truth unto presumption ; It is too common for men to go on in a state of sin, and ways of wickedness, and yet rest on

Deut. 29.
19, 20, 21.

Rom. 6. 1, 2.

on this, that God is love, God is merciful, Christ died for sinners, and the like: But such as walk after the imaginations of their own hearts, adding drunkenness to thirst, and yet say they shall have peace, they doubt not but God loves them as well as the best of them all; that is Spider-like, to suck poison from the sweetest Flower in the Garden of Scriptures, and the wrath of God will be kindled against such, and the curses written in the Book of God will come upon them; he will blot out their names from under heaven, and will separate them unto evil. This is to abuse the love of God, and to provoke even the God who loves himself to anger; and love abused turns to fury. The sweetest Wine makes the sharpest Vinegar, and this sweet love of God wronged and affronted, is the sting of Hell, the emphasis and accent of the misery of such as live and dye under the guilt thereof. *Shall we sin, saith Paul, that grace may abound? God forbid.* We cannot with abhorrency enough entertain such notions. This is to have our eye evil, because Gods is good, to turn the love of God into lasciviousness, therefore let us all beware thereof. Let all that share in this love, make suitable improvement

improvement thereof: This lies in imitati-
 on, and in contemplation: We should
 labour to be like God in this, and imitate
 him, though we cannot equalize him:
 He is Love to us, let us be love to him:
Oh love the Lord all ye his Saints! All Psal. 31.19.
 Our services without this are worth no-
 thing: Love is the fulfilling of the Law,
 and of the Gospel too, without it our ser-
 vices are burdensom to our selves, and
 unacceptable to God: Love makes hard
 things easy to us, and small things grate-
 ful to him: This makes what we do so
 pleasing, because it is so fuitable: God is
 a Spirit, therefore he is so well pleased
 with such as worship him in Spirit, as
 being most agreeable to his nature: The
 like may be said here; God is love, and
 requires to be served in love, for it is the
 perfection of all graces and duties; *He
 that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and
 God in him:* Can we have a higher or
 more noble pattern than love it self?
 What text in all the Bible can read us
 a more full lecture of love than this? Let
 us study to write it out into our hearts,
 and pray for the fulfilling of that promise;
I will circumcise your heart to love the Lord Deut. 30.6.
*your God, with all your heart, and with all your
 Soul, &c.* Were it once engraven on our
 D hearts,

Joh. 13.
34.

hearts, it would be legible in our lives and walkings. This Apostle *John* tell us, that love is both the Old Commandment, and the New, urging love upon a new motive, even the love of God and Christ to us. *A New Commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.* Oh that this example might prevail upon us, not to live in the neglect of love to God or man, but to abound therein, as he hath given us precept and president for it. Let the impression of Gods love be such upon our hearts, as to revive the decayed love amongst his People, that it may once again be said, as anciently it was; See how the Christians love one another.

1. Let our love run out to all men, for Gods love doth so: Which had such an influence upon Mr. *Fox*, that he never denied any one that begged of him for Gods sake. And let us not forget to love our Enemies, for this is to imitate God, who commended his love to his people, that when they were sinners, enemies, ungodly, Christ died for them: *Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear Children, and walk in love, as he hath loved you.*

2. We should contemplate this infinite love of God; solace our selves
in

in the Meditation of this love. It is the sweetest of the Divine Attributes; *St. Paul* saith, *Now abideth faith, hope, and charity; but the greatest of these is charity*: Let me say; There are many glorious attributes of God, his Power, Wisdom, Justice, and Love, but the sweetest of these is love: Yea, it is the sweetner of all the other attributes: The wisdom of God would amaze us, his power confound us, and his Justice destroy us, were it not for his love. Who would not be much in the contemplation of it, and say with the Church, *We will remember thy love Cant. 1. 4. more than Wine*? We may go too far in the contemplation of the other attributes, as in examining the reason of his actings towards his creatures; but we can never go too far in the meditation of his love: And when we cannot reach the bottom of it, let us imitate the Philosopher, who not being able to give the reason of the ebbing and flowing of the Sea, threw himself into it, saying, *Si ego non capiam te, tu capies me*: If I cannot comprehend thee, thou shalt comprehend me. Oh how sweet is it to bathe our Souls in the Ocean of divine love, to drown our selves in the contemplation thereof! Especially con-

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fidering,

Jer. 9. 22,
23, 24.

sidering, what power it has to bear up
our Spirits in all our troubles and adver-
sities. When of old, great Calamities,
were coming upon the Earth, when
death came up into the windows, God
gave forth this Attribute of his Loving-
kindness to his People to rejoyce in, and
solace themselves with: *Let him that glo-
rieth, glory in this, that he knoweth me to be
God exercising loving-kindness in the Earth.*
Thus do in perilous and evil days; by
Faith and Meditation solace our selves
in the apprehension of God's Love, that
we may possess our Souls in patience, and
enjoy God in our troubles; Oh let us live
and die cleaving by Faith to this Love
till we lanch into the infinite Ocean of
it, and so come to a fuller understanding
of this Text, that, *God is Love.*

SERMON

S E R M O N II.

Ephesians 2. 8.

*For by grace are ye saved, through faith,
and that not of your selves, it is the
gift of God.*

THat these words have relation to the foregoing passages is evident, by the particle (*For*) in the beginning of them. Some think the Apostle reassumes the Argument he had hinted at in the 5th v. in a Parenthesis, *By grace ye are saved*, and so gives a more full explication of them. Others refer them to what is spoken in the 7th verse, where the Apostle shews the end God had in the application of Salvation to these *Ephesians*, who were Gentiles, which was, that in the Ages to come he might shew forth the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness, &c. And then adds the words of the Text as a reason thereof; *For by grace are ye saved*; as if he had said, God hath therefore ordered it thus towards you, that it

Salvation is by Grace.

may appear that the Original of Salvation, and of all the means leading to it, is meerly and purely of grace. In the words we have Salvation laid down, with the Causes of it. (1.) The Principal Cause, Grace; *By grace are ye saved.* (2.) The Instrumental Cause, is Faith; *Through faith.* (3.) The Original of this Faith; this is set down, negatively; *And that not of your selves:* And affirmatively; *It is the gift of God.* There are three things in the words observable. (1.) That the Saints and People of God are saved here. (2.) That their Salvation is by or of grace. (3.) That the Faith through which they are saved, is not of themselves, but is the gift of God. Of these in order.

Doct. 1. *That the People of God are saved here.* It's twice set down in this chapter, *verse 5.* and in the Text, and in the present tense, *ye are saved.* To open this briefly.

Quest. 1. *What is Salvation, and what kind of Salvation is here intended?*

Answ. Salvation imports deliverance from evil and misery. Its three-fold; Temporal, Spiritual, and Eternal. (1.) Temporal Salvation, relating to the outward man. (*Exod. 14. 13.*) *Stand still,* says Moses to the Israelites, *and see the Sal-*
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vation of the Lord. This was an external bodily deliverance from the *Egyptians*. (1 Sam. 19. 5.) The Lord wrought great Salvation for all *Israel*; which was deliverance from their Enemies the *Philistines*. (2.) Spiritual Salvation. The Angels that stand were never under misery, therefore they are never said to be saved, (for Salvation is from misery) as men are. (Luke 1. 71.) *That we should be saved from our Enemies, &c.* Our spiritual Enemies are here intended, those that war against our Souls. (3.) Eternal Salvation. *Now is your Salvation nearer than when ye believed,* (Rom. 13. 11.) that is, your perfect and compleat Salvation. (*Heb. 9. ult.*) *Christ shall appear the second time without sin unto Salvation.* Now when the Apostle saith, *Ye are saved,* we may take it for spiritual, yea, we may include eternal Salvation; for not only the Text, but also other Scriptures speak the same Language. *This day is Salvation come to this house,* saith Christ, speaking of *Zachens*, (Luke 19. 9.) and his own coming thither. And the Apostle speaking of the preaching of the Cross, (1 Cor. 1. 18.) namely, of Christ crucified upon the Cross, saith, *to us which are saved, it is the power of God.* And Christ in his prayer, (Joh. 17. 3.) saith,

This is life eternal to know thee, &c. Not in the future tense, it shall be, but in the present, It is life eternal. *He that hath the Son, hath life;* (1 John 5. 12.) Christ is the Prince and Principle of life; he that hath union with him, and interest in him hath life. What life? not only the life of righteousness, whereby he is justified, and the life of holiness, whereby he is sanctified, but in a sense, the life of happiness and glory. We read, (John 3. 18.) *He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God.* That is, the sentence of condemnation is past against him (which yet by his believing shall be reversed,) and there wants nothing but execution. Should the thred of his frail life by which he hangs over the Pit of destruction, be cut, while he is in this condition, he is gone and lost for ever. Now is an unbeliever condemned already, and are not true Believers saved already. Surely yes: Hence Christ saith in the last verse of that chapter; *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life:* He walks upon the Battlements of Heaven and hath one foot in the Porch of Paradise. Those that shall be saved hereafter are saved here.

Quest. 2. Ye will say, In what respects are the People of God saved here?

Answ. 1. In pretio; in the price that was laid down for it: For not only are Believers themselves bought with a price, (1 Cor. 6.20.) but Salvation it self. Hence it is that the Apostle, (Eph. 1. 14.) calls Heaven a purchased Possession. Though to us a free gift, yet to Christ a dear purchase. No man ever made such a purchase of Lands, as Christ hath made of Souls: He purchased the Church with his own blood, (Acts 20.28.) The Apostle speaking of, (1 Pet. 1. 18, 19.) saith, It was not with silver and gold, that Believers are redeemed, but by the precious blood of Christ. This was also laid down for Heaven and Salvation, and in the name of Believers, and to their use; they have a present right and title to it upon that account. Salvation is not a reversion men come to after so many years, there are no Leases nor Reversions there; but though Christ holds possession for them, yet they have a right and title to it, and he is entered there a forerunner for them.

2. In promisso; in the promise of it. This is the promise that he hath promised us, eternal life, (1 John 2. 25.) Great is the difference between Divine and Humane promises.

promises. Men are either unable, and cannot, or else unfaithful, and will not perform their promises; but with God promise, and to perform, is all one. We have God's promise for it, the great Charter of Heaven, and so have the thing itself, are as sure of it, as if we were in full possession. *To him that orders his conversion aright, will I shew the Salvation of God (Psal. 50. 23.) He that believeth shall be saved, saith Christ, (Mark 16. 16.)* Hence have they a firm and sure foundation of hope for the actual possession. *(Titus 1. 2.) In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie hath promised.* And his promise is one of those two immutable things, in which it is impossible for him to lie. *(Heb. 6. 18.)* Hence the Apostle tells the Romans, *That we are saved by hope, (Rom. 8. 24.)* which is by virtue of the promise, the ground of hope.

3. *In primitiis*; in the prelibations, foretastes, or first-fruits of it. They have a pawn, or pledge, or rather an earnest of Salvation. The Love of God, Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost; yea, the Holy Ghost himself is an earnest to them of the full possession of glory. So he is styled *(2 Cor. 1. 22.)* And he is called the earnest of that Inheritance. *(Eph. 1. 14.)* They are here

here saved from the condemnation and dominion of sin, from the power of Satan, from the curse of the Law, from the sting and bitterness of death, as the Scripture plainly shews. Yea, they are infallibly preserved in a condition of safety, in grace, in righteousness, once justified, and ever so; for Christs righteousness is everlasting. And unto perfect glory; They are kept by the power of God through Faith unto Salvation. (1 Pet. 1. 5.) What are these but the bunches of Figs, and clusters of Grapes given the Saints from the heavenly *Canaan*? Is not this a good Country? Would you not be glad to be there? You have these first-fruits of the Spirit, to make you groan for the full Vintage, and compleat Harvest? Those first-fruits under the Law, assured them of the whole crop. So Believers have received these beginnings of Salvation, and on that account may be said to be saved already. If a man walks out early, and see the morning Star, he will say, the day is coming, the Sun will by and by appear: So if we have these Stars of grace seen in our hearts, we may know the day of eternal glory is not far off.

Qu. 3. You will say, *What are the reasons of this, and what the grounds of it?*

Ans.

Ans. 1. The first is drawn from the order and predisposition of God. The eternal love and good will of God is the first the highest link and cause of Salvation. The Scripture resembles mans Salvation to a Chain, on which are several Links as we may say; these Links are so fastened together, that if you draw one, all the rest will follow; such a concatenation and folding up of things together there is in the matters of Salvation, that grant one, and you grant all. If there be a certain number, whom God hath out of his eternal Love predestinated unto Salvation, it may as truly be said in the sense above mentioned, that this number is already saved, because nothing on Earth or in Hell can hinder it: But the first is true as is evident from what is said, (Rom. 29, 30.) *Whom he foreknew, he did predestinate to be conformed to the Image of his Son. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; whom he called, them he also justified; whom he justified, them he also glorified.* Here the Apostle useth words of the preterperfect tense for things yet to come. Thus hath God in his purpose disposed things, to shew, that Predestination and Salvation are so linked together in regard of their eternal coexistence before

before him in his counsels and purposes, as this order of his can never be dissolved. Therefore as they are said to be already foreknown, already predestinated, already called, and already justified; so they may as truly be said (in the senses before expressed) to be already glorified. I confess, if it were true some teach, that the purpose of God to save men, were founded upon faith and good works foreseen to be in them, and done by them, and that he saves them for these, and their continuance in them, I could not tell how this should be true, that a man truly called, can be said to be truly saved. But it is nothing so; but all is of grace, as the next Doctrine will evidence, and the Text fully expresseth. And if their wicked works could not hinder God from calling and justifying them, though he foresaw them, how shall he suffer their after-sins to null and make void these blessed acts, and so cut them short of Salvation? Vocation, Justification, and Glorification, are here made inseparable by the Apostle; break one, and you break all the Links of this golden Chain of Salvation. Let none go about to pervert this blessed order of God, for they shall not be able to destroy it, it is established by

by his eternal immutable counsel, and will not suffer it to fall or fail.

2. The second Reason is drawn from the power of the promises, and from the nature and effect of Faith. (1.) From the power of the promises; they are no weak things, but full of virtue and efficacy to help us to cleanse our selves (2 Cor. 7. 1.) *Having these promises, let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.* They do not only work for us but they work in us also, not only as motives and incentives to holiness, but as operative and influential upon us. Such power do they bring with them, that it is not in our power whether they shall be fulfilled or not: But though they offer no violence to infringe the liberty of our wills, yet do they enable and sweetly draw us by faith believing, and hope waiting upon God, to perform those conditions which bring on the execution of them. *We are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, (1 Pet. 1. 5.)* There is a power of God, and a power of Faith laying hold on the promises of God, which have a power to enable us to lay hold of Salvation. (2.) From the nature and effect of Faith; which is to make things future and absent to be present, to give

give them a real existence to the apprehension of the Saints. Hence it is said to be the *ὑπόστασις*, the substance, or rather subsistence of things hoped for, &c. Not a natural being or subsistence in regard of the things themselves, as if Faith did make that so to be which is not, but a being to the mind of a Believer, a mental being; this is not a meer fancy or imagination, but such a being as a Christian is confident of, as if they had a natural present subsistence. This may be understood by Christs words, (*John 6. 54.*) *Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life.* Though eternal life be to come in regard of the full fruition of it, yet it hath a present existence to the eye of Faith. These are the grounds of the Doctrine. The Use follows.

Use Of comfort and establishment to true Believers: Though the best is to come, yet all is not to come, you have something here; the best Wine is kept to the last, yet you are saved now, you have Christ now, and Heaven now in the purchase, and promise, and first-fruits of it: 'Tis true, *If you have hope in Christ in this life only, you are of all men most miserable,* (*1 Cor. 15. 19.*) for none on this side Hell suffer so much as Christians often do;

do ; and therefore, though men bring their best first, Christ reserves the best to the last ; yet that which they here receive, is more worth than the World, union and communion with Christ, the Holy Spirit dwelling in them, the graces and comforts in Ordinances, yea, in afflictions and troubles, those sweet illapses and divine flashes of light and life, the blessed peace and serenity of Conscience which is a continual feast, these beginnings of a state of Happiness is better than all the pleasures and treasures on Earth. Set this Salvation against all the crosses of this life. This cup of Salvation is able to sweeten the most bitter cups of Affliction : You receive a Crown here, and these crosses serve to brighten your Crown, to beautifie your Profession and Religion. Why are we so cast down at afflictions, when they are but Gems and Jewels to adorn this Crown of Salvation. We meet with many losses, but do we consider what our gains are ? Is not Salvation able to recompence our losses. Have we not God, and Christ, and Salvation still ? Why are we so anxious and solicitous about these outward things when if we lose them, and gain Salvation we are great gainers, but if we lose Salva

tion and our Souls, what can all the World profit us? *Basil* cried out, *Farewel life, let my Estate go, I have in Christ a better life, a more enduring substance; the more I lose for him, the more I find in him.* Set this Salvation against all worldly cares and fears, against an affectation of earthly vanities; Will Christ give thee a Crown, and deny thee a crumb? If he hath given thee Salvation, he will deny thee nothing good for thee. He would not have you fear want of these things, when it hath pleased him to give you a Kingdom. O let nothing discourage thee, or slack thy pace towards Heaven, but run with patience the Race set before thee; for he hath given thee Salvation, as a Garland to a Conquerour, in token of Victory. If any Soul say, O that I knew that I were of them, that have here received Salvation in the first-fruits of it! I answer briefly; Salvation is for the lost: The Son of Man is come to save that which is lost. Hast thou seen, and art under a sense of thy lost condition and disability to recover thy self? Hast thou fled to the City of Refuge for safety? Art thou gotten really into Christ, united to him by the Spirit and Faith? There is no Salvation in any other, (*Acts 4.12.*) Salvation
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is begun here in effectual vocation. *He hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling,* (2 Tim. 1. 9.) Salvation inferreth service, (*Luke 1. 74.*) Being delivered out of the hands of our Enemies, we might serve him. If thou findest these effects, there is Salvation come to thy house, to thy heart and soul; and thou mayest rejoyce in this Salvation: Thou art saved by the Lord with a spiritual and an everlasting Salvation. If yet thou art short of it, thou press after it, work out thy own salvation with fear and trembling. Look to Christ by Faith, and be ye saved, (*Isa. 45. 22.*) O labour to close with the offers of it in the Gospel. Behold, now is the day of Salvation, the day will not always last; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation? (*Heb. 2. 3.*) And if you are partaker of this Salvation, then where your happiness is, there let your hearts be. *Where the carcass is, there will the Eagles be gathered.* 'Tis the part of a Beetle to creep upon the Earth, but the Eagle is never more like her self, than when she gets furthest off from it. If there be any thing of the Eagle in you, you will then soar aloft in Divine Ejaculations, and heavenly Meditations. O let your trading and traffick be in Heaven! (*Cant. 7. 4.*) Thy No

like the Tower of Lebanon; it's spoken of the Church. Look to the phrase it self, seems absurd and ridiculous, to have a Spouse like a Tower, is monstrous. But the meaning is spiritual, it sets out to us the sharpness of smell the Spouse had, favouring and resenting heavenly things: Oh let us get strong affections to Christ, favouring the things above! The Earth moves downward, but grace is like fire spiring upwards. The Sun draws up the vapours, and the Sun of Righteousness should draw all our hearts up to him. These things well become those that have entred Heaven, as I may say, and are favoured here. O how good is it to have our way of Life above, and to meditate on the undefiled Inheritance there! Often to take a turn upon Mount *Tabor*, and to be transfigured there as Christ was; or upon Mount *Olivet*, from whence he ascended up into Heaven: O that we could get upon such a Mountain, and ascend to God by heavenly meditations and desires! I shall close this first Proposition with those words, *Heb. 12. 28.*) *Wherefore having received a Kingdom which cannot be shaken, since we are entred it already, let us not think we may live as we list, but let us have grace to serve God acceptably with reverence*

and godly fear. O walk worthy of him that hath called you into his Kingdom & Glor

Doct. 2. *That Salvation is of Grace.* (or of) *Grace are ye saved*, saith the Apostle here, both in the 5th verse, and in the Text. *The grace of God bringeth salvation* (Titus 2. 11.) Grace is variously taken in the Scripture, but here for the free love and favour of God, saving them that are unworthy, and deserve the contrary, especially when God shews favour and mercy to some, and not to others: *For God is gracious to whom he will be gracious*, (Rom. 9. 15, 16.) *and hath compassion on whom he will have compassion.* If any ask, whether God should not have been gracious if he had saved all mankind? I answer, Yes; but his grace is now more full to those that he saves when others are lost; even as a Prince's grace is more full to one than to two Rebels whom he saves out of many, they being obnoxious to the Justice of the Law as well as others. Two things will clear the meaning of this Proposition to us, if we duly consider them.

1. That the first and last stone of the building of salvation is of grace: Not of grace infused into us, but of grace as it is seated in God, his free favour to the creature. All the spiritual blessings which

are bound up in the bundle of salvation, flow from this fountain of the free and rich love and grace of God. Election is of grace, (*Rom. 11.6.*) *There is a remnant according to the election of grace.* Vocation is of grace; the Apostle *Paul* saith, God called him by his grace, (*Gal. 1.12.*) Justification is of grace, (*Rom. 3.24.*) *Being justified freely by his grace.* Regeneration and Adoption are of grace, (*Eph. 1.5.*) Adoption is said to be according to the good pleasure of his will, (*James 1.18.*) *Of his own will begat he us.* Redemption is said to be according to the riches of his grace, (*Eph. 1.7.*) Hope and Faith are of grace. We read of some who believed through grace, and of good hope through grace, (*Acts 18.8. 2 Thes. 2.16.*) Power against sin is from the same, (*Rom 6.14.*) *Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace.* The New Covenant is a Covenant of grace. When *Adam* had spent all that stock of grace he had at first, it was free whether God would set him up again. The giving of the Gospel is called the dispensation of the grace of God, (*Eph. 3.2.*) 'Tis true, the meritorious cause of all this was the death of Christ, yet it was grace which set thy design on foot. It was by the grace of God he tasted death, (*Heb. 2.9.*)

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2. That all this Salvation is only of grace. For in the Scripture grace is opposed to works, (*Rom. 4. 4.*) *To him that worketh, the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.* And further, (*Rom. 11. 6.*) he saith, if it be of grace, (speaking of Election,) then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace: But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work. Plainly setting grace and works in direct opposition in the matters of Salvation. After having said here, *By grace ye are saved,* presently adds in the next verse; *Not by works,* (*Titus 3. 5.*) *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but of his mercy hath he saved us,* (*2 Tim. 1. 9.*) *Hath saved us, and called us, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which he purposed in Christ Jesus, before the world began.* These Scriptures give full witness to this point, and shew, that it is only of grace and not of works. Therefore those that die in their infancy, and such as repent at the last hour, as the Thief on the Cross did, are saved by grace only, for they can do no good works. If it were of works, it must be either of those done before conversion, or of those after it. Not of those before conversion, for they are

but *splendida peccata*, as some term them ; all a man doth in this state is not only sinful, but sin it self ; for they are not done in faith, without which it is impossible to please God, (*Heb. 11. 6.*) The Pharisees, and the young man in the Gospel, did very many good works, yet they were not saved by their good works. God accounts of fruits according to the nature of the root whence they spring. *A bad Tree cannot bring forth good fruit*, saith Christ, (*Matth. 7. 18.*) Nor yet of works after conversion, for when converted, they are in a great measure saved, as you heard in the former Doctrine. Good works are rather the effect of salvation, for they are new created unto good works, (*Eph. 2. v. 10.*) Besides, that cannot be the ground of salvation, which is it self imperfect, as all their best works are. And were they free from imperfection, yet could they not merit salvation ; because, whatever merits, it must be *proprium*, our own ; *Indebitum*, that which we are not bound to do ; and *proportionatum*, it must bear a proportion to the thing merited. The best works of the best men are defective and wanting in all these ; for they are not their own, but wrought in God, and by the strength of Christ : They are due to

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God,

God, even the utmost of their ability; their bounden duty; nor do finite works bear any proportion to an infinite reward. The doings and sufferings of the best therefore, can be no causes of salvation for they can never be accepted but by the Righteousness of Christ, and not for anything in them or their works meritoriously. *He hath made us accepted in the Beloved, (Eph. 1. 6.)* and therefore salvation is to the praise of the glory of his grace, as it is in that verse. Some will say, salvation is promised as a reward (*Heb. 11. 26.*) but not a reward of debt but of free bounty; *The gift of God is eternal life, (Rom. 6. ult.)* You will say, Glory is the Crown of Righteousness; but that is only in respect of God's promise, and Christ's purchase. You will say, Are works wholly excluded from the state of salvation? Nothing so, only excluded from being the causes of salvation. They are *via regni*, not *causa regnandi*, as some speak. Some from what hath been said may grow flighty in good works, and neglect them. *Luther* is reported to complain in his time, that if he commended good works to men, some would do them as if they would set up a Ladder to climb to Heaven by them; if he extolled the free

free grace of God as the grand cause of salvation, and acceptance with God, they would lay aside good works, or be very negligent and formal in them. But let us remember, that though salvation be not of good works, yet they ought to be done, because it is the will of God we should be zealous of good works, (*Titus* 2. 14.) We are created in Christ unto good works, which God ordained we should walk in them. They that have believed in God, should be careful to maintain good works. (*Titus* 3. 8.) *Faith without works is dead*; Let our Light so shine before men, that they may see our good works, &c. (*Mat.* 5. 16.) Good works, if neglected, a man cannot be saved, yet are we not saved for them; they are good companions, which make our journey more comfortable, yet our company do not carry us. And though salvation be not for them, yet God rewards every man according to them, and will not suffer any good work to be lost, but will abundantly reward it.

Here I might assign Reasons why salvation is of grace: I will name but one, because that is hinted at here; namely, to exclude boasting, that no flesh may glory in God's presence. *Not of works, lest any man should boast*, saith the Apostle; that all
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men may walk humbly with God, and glory in him alone; and hence he saith (*Rom. 3. 27.*) Boasting is excluded; By what Law? by the Law of works: Nay, but by the Law of faith. The Use follows.

Use 1. Is Salvation of grace, and only of grace? Then here we see how evil and dangerous it is to seek to be saved by or for our good works. No man can be saved who neglects them, yet no man is saved for them; they are not the cause of salvation, but grace alone. The Moralist will plead, he hath been no drunkard, no unclean person, no unjust dealer; the Hypocrite will attempt every good work in shew and appearance at least, and the profane person purposeth to be better, and to do better; thus men think to be saved by their works: Those also that are troubled they can do no more good works, and not troubled for want of the knowledge of the grace of God, and for want of his Spirit assisting to every good work: Are you not those that may say, some of you, that you have found sweetness from your good works and deeds, when you have been enlarged in them, rather than from the sense of the rich and free grace of God? When you

you have done them well, then you are comforted, but if dead and distracted in them, then discouraged and cast down; what do these things shew, but that we seek salvation by works? Some cannot endure to hear of the sinfulness of their good works, of the raggedness of their own best Righteousness: Thus did the Pharisees, they could not endure Christ should pull up the Bridge upon which they hoped to go to Heaven; these think to be saved by their good works; whereas we should say, We serve God, because his free and rich grace invites; and though imperfections cleave to our works, yet we expect not salvation by them, but we appeal to the rich and free love and grace of God to save us. To go about to claim salvation by works, is to take away the heart and life of the Gospel. A man may as soon think to get over a deep River upon the shadow of a Tree that grows by it, as get to Heaven by his good works: This very thought mars and poisons all; if thou thinkest to be saved by them, it is very doubtful whether thou dost not run the very hazard of thy salvation, be thy doings never so good. The Gospel is a Doctrine of the utmost self-denial; it draws men to
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good works in respect of performance and then draws them off from good works in regard of dependance. O that we could learn this great Mystery!

Use 2. Suffer the word of Exhortation in a few brief particulars. (1.) Let us learn to study the rich and free grace of God more, and to grow in the knowledge of it; for it is by grace we are saved. The right knowledge of it striketh down all presumption, and engageth to duty and service. Men dare not sin that grace may abound, or turn this grace into wantonness, but will abhor it; it is the presumptuous man that abuseth and despiseth grace, and makes use of it to neglect a holy life, and walking in good works. (2.) Let all be encouraged to seek salvation by grace. Thou mayest not say or think, thou canst not be saved because thy sins are many and great; for we read of the manifold grace of God, to take away thy manifold past and present sins, (1 Pet. 4. 10.) And, *where sin abounded, grace did much more abound,* (Rom. 5. 20.) Look for salvation in this way, and here is hope for thee. It is a speech unbecoming any to say, The God of grace never intended any thing of grace for me. Seek it humbly, as Beggars that cannot compel

compel an Alms : Seek it with hope, waiting patiently on the Lord, and by no means say and think there is no hope for thee. Grace can save whom it will; it justifies the ungodly, not in, but from their ungodliness, and what ground hast thou to conclude against thy self? For a Soul to say, If I were so holy, I could then cast my self upon grace; it destroys the nature of grace. Remember that sweet promise, (*Job 22. 29.*) *He will save the humble person.* Put thy self into the arms of grace, and thou wilt find the sweetness of it. There is no Soul here this day, but for ought I know, may come to be saved by this grace, if the fault be not his own, thinking he may live in his sin, and walk after his ungodly lusts, and yet rest on grace to save him. *Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid,* (*Rom. 6. 1.*) Better it were salvation had never been offered to us, than that either we be found refusers or abusers of it, and so meet with the forest destruction. (3.) Let all God's People know and do their duty in answer to this grace. Mourn for your sins against the Lord, because grace shall reign notwithstanding all your sins, as the Apostle shews, (*Rom. 5. ult.*) Strongly desire the perfection of salvation; attribute
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all to grace, as *Paul* did; he pressed forward towards the mark, (*Phil. 3.14.*) And though he laboured more than others, yet he saith, it was not he, but the grace of God which was with him, (*1 Cor. 15.10.*) Set the Crown upon the head of grace, and they, (*Zech. 4. 7.*) cried Grace, grace. Rest upon grace for the consummating salvation; and act in some resemblance to the way of God: He saves you freely, do you serve him freely; and do you continue to own, profess, and believe in this grace persevering in all those things that accompany salvation, till you be fully possessed of it.

Doct. 3. *That the Faith through which we are saved, is not of our selves, but is the gift of God: Or thus; The work of Faith to Salvation, is not of humane operation, but of divine donation.* Here are three things to be cleared. (1.) That those that are saved by grace, are yet saved through faith. (2.) That this work of faith to salvation is not of themselves. (3.) That it is the gift of God. Of these in order.

Branch 1. Those that are saved by grace, are yet saved through faith, or in the way of believing. The Text is expressive for it. So the Commission runs that Christ gave his Apostles, (*Mar. 16.15, 16.*)

He saith to them, *Go ye into all the world, preach the Gospel to every creature; He that believeth shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned. As many as were ordained to eternal, life, believed.* Whom God hath appointed to salvation as the end, he hath ordained to faith as the means. *We are of them that believe to the saving of the Soul,* saith the Apostle, (*Heb. 10. 39.*) ἀλλὰ πίστεως, *but of faith.* The adverbative conjunction shews, that Apostacy and Faith cannot stand together. The backslider is no true Believer. The nature of this faith, which is saving, is best understood by considering four things which relate to it, viz. The Author, the Object, the Act, and the Ground of it. (1.) The Author of it is God, whence it is stiled the faith of the operation of God, (*Col. 2. 12.*) There is a humane faith, framed by the strength of reason, but this is a blessed fruit of the Spirit of God, (*Gal. 5. 22.*) it is there reckoned among them. It is the effect of that almighty power which was put forth in the Resurrection of Christ, (*Eph. 1. 19, 20.*) (2.) The Object of it, as saving, is Christ. So every where in the Scripture; (*John 3. 16.*) *Whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, &c.* When the Jaylor (*Acts 16. 30, 31.*) asked what he should do to

to be saved; he was directed to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and had the assurance of being saved if he did so. *He himself directs us to do thus, (John 14. 1.) To believe in God, believe also in me. And he told the Jews, (John 8. 24.) If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sin.* Faith indeed embraceth the promises, but not for themselves, but for Christ, as he is wrapt up in them (3.) The Acts of Faith, which are the assent of the mind, and the consent of the heart: The assent of the mind to those glorious Truths that concern Christ, and the salvation of man through him: As, That he came forth from God the Father, with commission to negotiate in this great work; *Him hath God the Father sealed, (John 6. 27.) That he was incarnate: The Word was made flesh; (John 1. 14.) That he is the very Son of God, as Peter saith, (Mat. 16. 16.) Thou art Christ the Son of the living God.* That there is no other name given under Heaven by which we can be saved, (*Acts 14. 12.*) These and the like Principles the mind assents to. This is not sufficient to make it saving faith, unless the heart consents also. *If thou believest with all thy heart* says Philip to the Eunuch, (*Acts 8. 2.*) *With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.*

ness, (*Rom. 10. 10.*) It makes the heart esteem Christ most precious, (*1 Pet. 2. 7.*) To you that believe he is precious. It is that which helps us to receive Christ into our very hearts. He dwells in the heart by faith, (*Eph. 3. 17.*) and causeth the Soul to accept him in all his Offices and Natures, and to rely on him alone for Justification, and Salvation, desiring to be found in him, having the Righteousness which is by Christ, and of God by faith, as *Paul* speaks, (*Phil. 3. 9.*) And for our preservation in the mean time, living (as the Apostle saith, (*Gal. 2. 20.*) by the faith of the Son of God. (4.) The ground of it is the promise of God. For a man to believe for salvation without a promise to build his faith upon, is presumption and self-delusion. We find *Abraham* had this for the foundation of his faith, (*Heb. 6. 13.*) *Rom. 4. 20, 21.*) He rested on the promises of God by faith, and staggered not at them through unbelief. For a man to believe that God will save him, though he be out of Christ, and though there be no principles of grace and holiness in him, is to build without a foundation, for so such only is salvation promised. This is the nature of saving faith. If any enquire, what the concurrence of faith to

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salvation is? I answer briefly; Faith con-
 curreth to salvation as it unites to Christ.
 All things requisite to salvation meet
 Christ; but none have this salvation
 him, but such as are united to him. Eter-
 nal life is in the Son, and *he that hath the*
Son, hath life, he that hath not the Son, hath
not life, (1 John 5. 11, 12.) Communion
 grounded upon union, and this is the pro-
 per effect of faith; it doth interest the
 Soul in the merit of Christ, and gives it
 share in his Righteousness, which is un-
 all, and upon all them that believe, (Rom.
 3. 22.) and this by virtue of union. Hence
 proceeds peace; *Being justified by faith, we*
have peace with God, (Rom. 5. 1.) Faith doth
 interest the Soul in the Spirit of Christ.
We know he abideth in us, by his Spirit that
he hath given us. Now it is evident, that
 from the presence of the Spirit flows all
 things necessary to salvation. Mortifica-
 tion of sin; *If we through the spirit mortify*
the deeds of the body, we shall live: The
 life of grace; *He that believeth on the Son,*
out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.
 This spake Christ of the Spirit which Be-
 lievers should receive, (John 7. 38, 39.)
 Thus faith is the Nurse of all graces,
 drawing sap from Christ the root, and
 deriving influence from the Spirit to keep
 them

them in life and activity. In a word, it gives victory over temptations, outward from the world, alluring or affrighting, (1 John 5. 4.) *This is the victory whereby we overcome the world, even our faith:* And inward from Satan: By this shield of faith we may be able to quench all the fiery darts of that wicked one, (Eph. 6. 16.) Perseverance in the ways of God; *for by faith ye stand,* (2 Cor. 1. 24.) viz. by leaning upon the power of God, which is the Spirit of God, a Spirit of power: And thus are Believers kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, (1 Pet. 1. 5.)

If any further enquire, How the way of faith is consistent with grace? I answer; Very well, as appears by what is said, (Rom. 4. 16.) *Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace:* For there is no grace so modest and humble, that arrogates nothing to it self, but gives all to grace, as faith is and doth. Faith saves in a way of grace, a precarious way: It is empty and poor, hath nothing of it self, but receives all from grace, and gives all again unto grace; so that no way could have been found out more advantageous to the glory and honour of grace, than this of faith. Had it been through love, repentance, or good works, there would have

been some ascribing to the creature ; but faith sets the whole Crown upon the head of grace, and therefore we have reason to admire this blessed contrivance of God, who hath ordered salvation to be through faith, that it might more eminently appear to be of grace. Beside Faith it self is a fruit of grace ; it is of grace that faith is given, (*Phil. 1. 29.*) *To you it is given, freely given, to believe in Christ.* It is of grace that faith is accepted, not for its own worth or excellency. So it appears to be consistent with grace that it be of faith, for faith doth not eclipse, but illustrate the glory of grace.

Branch 2. That the work of faith to salvation is not of humane operation ; *is not of our selves,* faith the Text. For there is no power in man that hath any tendency to produce such an effect as this. For there was not a principle of faith formally in *Adam* at first, and what might be in him virtually by reason of that original Righteousness in which he was created, is destroyed by the fall ; so that man is become weak, (*Rom. 5. 6.*) and said to be without strength ; his mind dark ; he perceiveth not the things of God, (*1 Cor. v. 14.*) *they are foolishness to him, nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

cerned. The preaching of faith in a crucified Christ as the way of salvation, was to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness, (1 Cor. 1. 23.) The will and affections are dead, and Christ lays the great guilt of unbelief upon mans will: *I e will not come to me,* saith he to the Jews, *that ye might have life,* (John 5. v. 40.) Men had rather perish justly, than be saved freely: They will rather run the hazard of eternal ruine, than be beholden to Christ to save them. Such is the security and desperate pride in the hearts of men: They are full of the world, and of self-righteousness, (as the Pharisees, who trusted in themselves that they were righteous,) that they go about to establish their own righteousness, and will not submit to the righteousness of God. This way crosseth carnal reason, and contradicts the carnal will, that men are filled with prejudice against the way of salvation God hath appointed. By all which it is evident, that the work of faith is not of humane operation.

Branch 3. I shall shew that faith is of divine donation, it is the gift of God. *To you it is given to believe on Christ,* (Phil. 1. v. 29.) which is manifest, by its rise, springing from eternal Election; *as many*

as were ordained to eternal life believed (Acts 13. 48.) and therefore called the faith of God's Elect, as being peculiar to them : This also is evident to be God's gift, by the power which is put forth in effecting it, which is the same that wrought in Christ when he was raised from the dead, (Eph. 1. 19, 20.) It is yet further manifest, by the way wherein it is wrought, and that is, by God's own teaching and drawing, (John 6. 44, 45.) *No man can come to me, except the Father draw him. Every one that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto me, saith Christ.* What can be more plain than this, that it is by God's teaching, opening mens Eyes, and revealing Christ to them, attracting and changing their wills, that they are brought to close with him in a way of faith?

Obj. 1. Some will say, *If there be no power in us this way, how can any man believe?*

Answ. There is yet left *potentia obedientialis* ; I mean, man is subjected to the power of God, that he cannot resist his working, (Psal. 110. 3.) *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power ; Volunteers in the day of thy Armies, as Mr. Ainsworth reads it ; Populus voluntatum, so the Original*

ginal. And thus they are in this work of believing : No violence is offered at all to the will, but the averfeness to this act taken away ; and though Christ's power is upon it, yet it acts freely, denying it self in any thing of its own, so as not to trust in it, or depend upon it. It is willing to lay the stress of its salvation upon Christ alone, though it hath but a bare word to rest upon, and to take Christ upon his own terms in the execution of all his Offices, though it be contrary to the constitution of a natural condition. *I will work,* saith God, *and who shall let it ? (Isa. 43. 13.)* If in a way of Judgment, it be thus, that none can withstand God, much more is it so in a way of grace. Hence that (*Matth. 3. 9.*) *God is able of these stones to raise up Children unto Abraham.* This he doth in a spiritual sense, when he takes away the heart of stone, that principle of hardness, and resistance, and opposition, that is in the will, and makes it pliable and yielding to the impressions of his Grace and Spirit, and so of a flinty makes a fleshy heart.

Obj. 2. *If men have no power to believe, why doth God command them to believe ?*

Ans^r. God's command is founded upon his own right, not upon our power.

Mans losing his ability to obey, doth more deprive God of his right to command, than a Debtors wilful disabling himself to pay what he owes, deprives his Creditor of a right to demand his due. Besides, the thing commanded is not impossible *in se*, in it self; if we have made it so by sin unto our selves, shall God be the blame? How unworthy and vile are such reflections upon his holy Majesty. Add to all this, That God hath provided in the Covenant what he commands. Does he command us to make a new heart and a clean heart? he hath promised to give it. So here, if he commands us to believe, when he sees we have no power to do it, yet he is just, yea, and merciful too; for he hath promised to write his Law upon the hearts of his people, to take away the rebellious opposite heart, and to give a tender flexible heart to the writings of his Spirit, to shew us our own weakness and wants, and his grace, power and goodness to supply us, if we come to him for it.

Obj. 3. How can men justly perish for unbelief, seeing faith is not of themselves, and they cannot believe?

Answ. In some respects men cannot believe, but their cannot returns upon them

themselves : There is indeed a Judicial cannot, (*John* 12, 39, 40.) Therefore they could not believe, because *Esaïas* had said, He hath blinded their Eyes, &c. This is a spiritual Judgment in punishment of their former sin, (*Matth.* 13. 14.) In them is fulfilled the Prophecy of *Esaïas*, which saith, *In hearing ye shall hear, and not understand, in seeing ye shall see, and not perceive, &c.* Men close their Eyes voluntarily, and then God doth it judicially. But then there is a cannot *in sensu composito*, as I may say ; as thus ; it is impossible for a sitting man to walk, that is, while he sits, he cannot walk, (*John* 5. 44.) Christ saith, *How can ye believe ?* That is, whilst ye do those things that keep you in unbelief : But lay those aside, and then there is a possibility, yea, a probability you may believe, if not a certainty of your believing. Further ; in some respects men cannot, but it is not their cannot for which they perish, a cannot of natural inability : The Scriptures upbraid not men with disability, but with disobedience. To them that be disobedient, saith the Apostle, (*1 Pet.* 2. 7.) *The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner.* It is a positive act of the will rejecting Christ, for which men perish, and justly too,

too, (*Luke 19. 14.*) *We will not have a man to reign over us*, say they: Justly might he say, *verse 27. Those mine Enemies* *would not I should reign over them, bring them, and slay them before me.* The Uses of this point follow.

Use 1. Of Information; This sheweth men their dangerous mistakes. Some men apprehend a facility of believing; this is highly presumptuous; *it is not your selves*, saith the Text: It is exceedingly pernicious, for it makes men flighty in examining this work, and careless in improving the means; and like the fool *Solomon* speaks of, (*Eccles. 4. 5.*) that folded his hands together, and eateth his own flesh; careless, and negligent, and bringeth themselves to ruine. Others are ready to murmur against God, and think to charge their unbelief upon him, but he will be justified when he appears, and clear when he judgeth. As *Adam* at first, so men at the last, will be ready to lay blame on him, but he will surely return it upon themselves, and say, as of old, *O Israel thou hast destroyed thy self!* O ye Sons of Men, your guilt is upon your own heads. Because unbelievers were preingaged against the offers of grace, men have beforehand made over themselves to Satan.

Satan, and the World, and are careless about the means of grace: Sinners do not what they may and can, they improve not the rational faculties God gives them, (*Isa.* 6.8.) Remember this, & shew your selves men. Why should men then think hardly of God? Idolaters act beneath men. Surely his proceedings against them will be just, and their condemnation righteous.

Use 2. Let us all examine and enquire into our hearts for a true work of faith, through which we may be saved. It was unfeigned faith that was in *Timothy*, (*2 Tim.* 1. 5.) Is ours such? We all profess we believe, is it so indeed? Thus it may be known. (1.) By strong desires to receive Christ on Gospel-terms; as King, Priest and Prophet, not only to be saved by him, but to yield subjection to him; not only to tast of his bounty, but to cleave to him in duty. No unbeliever doth desire Christ in this extent and latitude; he his for happiness, not for holiness, for Christ to save him, and for his lusts to rule him: In times of trouble, sickness and death, he hath strong desires after Christ, let these Clouds blow over, and his desires are vanished. *David* did not only desire God would hide his face from his sins, but that he would create in him
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a clean heart, and renew in him a right spirit. (2.) True faith is a mourning grace, it makes a penitent heart. *They look on him whom they have pierced and mourn,* (*Zech. 12. 10.*) Penitent tears flow from Faiths Eye; it mourns for its own weakness, and for strength of unbelief (*Mark 9. 24.*) as he said with tears, *I believe, Lord, help my unbelief.* (3.) It cannot rest in its weakness, but desires the sincere milk of the Word, by which it was first wrought, that it may grow thereby (*1 Pet. 2. 2.*) (4.) It will cleave to Christ for ever, and not part with him, or from him, upon any terms. The Gadarenes suddenly parted from Christ, for they believed not in him. Some, yea many of his Disciples went away from him, and walked no more with him, (*John 6. 66.*) These had no true work of faith in them. But would *Peter*, and the rest that had received the gift of faith go away from him? No, for the world, *verse 68.* When Christ put the question to them, *Peter* answered for the name of them all, *Lord, to whom shall we go from thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life.* What true faith wants in evidence, it will make up in adherence. Let us all try our selves in this matter by the notes, and not deceive our own Souls.

Use 3. Of Exhortation ; (1.) Let all that want faith go out of themselves for it, and seek this gift at the hand of God. He gives it by means : The Gospel is the word of faith, (*Rom. 10. 8.*) The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of Faith, (*2 Cor. 4. 13.*) and he is the Spirit of Promise. O wait in Gospel dispensations, in the word of faith, for the work of faith, and oppose not the Spirit when he offers his help to this work. And remember, whatever gift God gives, if you have not this gift of faith, all is nothing. What is the gift of wealth ? What is the gift of restraining grace ? What is the gift of humane wisdom ? What is the gift of ordinances, the gift of prayer, having not this grace of faith given with and above them ? Can they satisfy ? Can they sanctify ? Can they save us ? Had not the rich fool in the Gospel, the young man, and the Pharisees, and *Herod* these gifts ? yet all perished for want of faith to save them. We may covet the best gifts, but this of faith is the more excellent way to life and salvation. O pray much and earnestly for this grace, and know, if you that are evil can give good things to your Children, how much more will God give faith to them that so ask him. (2.) Believers

lievers are bound to glorifie God for
 gift : For faith is precious, (2 *Pet.* 1.
 the trial of it, much more faith it
 is more precious than gold. Gold is
 cious among men, and *Solomon* saith,
ney answers all things : So doth faith
 more. Consider what manner of
 faith is, and it will cause them that
 it to glorifie God for it, (1.) 'Tis a
 ritual gift, for it is wrought by the po
 of the Spirit, and that is the very re
 carnal men are so little affected with
 for they cannot understand it. (2.)
 a free gift : Thou hast nothing to give
 it. The Queen of *Sheba* gave great
 to *Solomon*, because of his wisdom, but
 hast none to give to God. 'Tis free
 because thou hast done nothing for it.
David slew many of the Philistines, to ha
Saul's Daughter given him, but thou
 slain no lust, done no service for G
 that faith should be given thee. Fre
 is also, because without any relation
 engage him to thee. A Father gives
 his Child, because he is his Child ;
 thou art by nature a Child of w
 (3.) 'Tis an excellent and choice gift,
 led *precious faith*, as before was touch
 God gives the men of the world the h
 and stubble of the world, but to them

gives precious faith ; precious in respect of the worker, God ; the object, Christ ; the end, Salvation ; and in respect of the variety of blessings it lets thee into. This is the golden Key that lets thee into all the Treasures of grace and mercy laid up in Christ, into comfort here, and glory hereafter. (4.) 'Tis a lasting gift. This gift of God is without repentance. God repented he gave *Saul* a Kingdom, and so he may repent he gives men so much of the world ; but where he bestows this gift of saving faith, he never repents of it. The comfort and assurance of faith, the lively actings and stirrings of faith may be suspended, but the habit, root and principle of faith is not destroyed or removed. (5.) It is a growing gift ; a man may increase it, or he may diminish it ; but this gift shall increase, and grow from faith to faith, from strength to strength, from one degree to another. Oh what cause have Believers then to glorifie God for this unspeakable gift ! And shew your thankfulness in two things. (1.) In living, and making use of faith in all times and conditions. Look to God for skill to use it, to fetch power from Christ to subdue lusts and the world. This is your Victory,

Victory, even your faith : O make use of it to fetch out of Christs fulness grace for grace. This is that grace which will go with us from place to place, from Countrey to Countrey, from Earth to Heaven. Men may take away our Estate, our Relations, but we may go up leaning on this *Jacobs* staff, through all the troubles of this Wilderness, till we come to the heavenly *Canaan*. This will make us take joyfully the spoiling of our goods, and make a Prison as good, yea better than a Pallace ; It makes that which is terrible to others, comfortable to you. It made some of the Primitive Christians cry out to their Persecutors, to deliver them from some new afflictions, and to increase their torments. By faith they gloried in tribulations, and glorified God in the fire. We learn, and labour to act faith in all conditions. In your losses, act faith in Gods providence and promises, that he will give you more of himself, and shed abroad more of his Love into your hearts, and manifest more of his image and grace in your Souls. If your Enemies come against you, act faith in Gods presence ; and believe, that though Men and Devils be against you, yet God and his holy Angels are with you, and for you ; and give

are these, than those against you. If you feel not the presence of God with you, yet act faith in his presence, and say, For a moment he is gone, but with everlasting kindness will he return. That you believe your Husband loves you, though he be absent from you, and that he will see you again, and your heart shall rejoyce, and your Joy shall no man take away from you. If you be brought low in the world, act faith in God's bond and engagement; for though a man hath no money by him, yet if he hath good bonds, he comforts himself: So may you, who have God's Covenant and Promises for your security. So when death comes, act faith then, and remember you are members of Christ, and shall not perish: Believe God is with you in death, as he was with *Daniel*, the three Children, and *David*, who on that very account would not fear to pass through the valley of the shadow of death, (*Psal.* 23.4.) Act faith in the Kingdom of God, and say to thy Soul, as Christ did to the believing thief, To day shalt thou be with Christ in Paradise. Though we break our fast with Enemies, said some Martyrs, yet we shall sup with *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob* in the Kingdom of God. 2.) Press after the perfection of your
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faith ; as the inchoation, so the confirmation of faith is the gift of God ; He the Author and the Finisher of your Faith, (*Heb. 12. 2.*) It is of God to confirm faith ; Christ prays your faith fail not, (*Luke 22. 32.*) Pray, as they pray, (*Luke 17. 5.*) *Lord, increase our faith;* will he fulfil the good pleasure of his grace in you, and the work of faith with power, (*2 Thes. 1. 11.*) And in due time you shall receive the end of your faith, the salvation of your Souls. There is nothing lacking in your faith, but it shall be perfected, and you shall walk by sight, and not by faith.

S E R M O N III.

Deteronomy 8. 16.

Who fed thee in the Wilderness with Manna.

SOME of the Heathens, even by the Light of Nature, were carried to begin all things with God. *A Jove principium*, was a Maxim among them. How much more commendable is it amongst them to whom are committed the Oracles of God, that they should remember God, and acknowledge him upon all occasions? because it is his assistance that is the principle of all performances, and his presence that is the safety of all conditions. This is that therefore which *Moses* in this chapter does put *Israel* upon, that in the midst of all their sufficiency, they remember God, and thankfully acknowledge his bounty and goodness towards them. This he inculcates and urgeth upon them once and again from the 10th verse of this chapter unto the 15th. *When thou hast ea-*

ten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God, &c. Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, &c. v. 10, 11. So again v. 13, 14. Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, then thy heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, &c. Then Moses proceeds to mention some particular favours God had bestowed on them in the Wilderness; he enumerates his leading them *verse 15.* who led thee in the Wilderness even till they were gotten through it. And here in the Text he speaks of his feeding them there: Where we may observe

- (1.) The Agent; implied in the word *who*; which hath reference to the *14th* verse, where God is mentioned; he it was that had the chief hand in this glorious work. 'Tis said indeed, he led them by the hand of *Moses* and *Aaron*; but they were only his Instruments, he was the principal Agent: So *Moses* struck the Rock but God caused water to flow out thence.
- (2.) The Act, *Fed*; that is, provided food.
- (3.) The Persons that were fed by him *Thee*; not a particular person only, but the people of *Israel*.
- (4.) The Place; where was it he thus provided for them? In the *Wilderness*.
- (5.) The food it self where with he fed them there; *with Manna*, which we read, (*Exod. 16. 14, 15.*) *What*

the dew was gone up, behold, upon the face of the Wilderness, there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. And when the Children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is Manna; for they wist not what it was: And Moses said unto them, This is the bread the Lord hath given you to eat. It was not like the Manna we use, which is Physical, but it was for food, being prepared by the great God for that use. There are two Propositions in the Text. (1.) That God orders a Wilderness-condition to be the lot of his Church and People in this world. (2.) That he will provide for them in this Wilderness-state.

Doct. 1. That God sometimes orders a Wilderness-condition to be the lot of his Church and People in this world. Thus we see it was his dispensation to Israel, to bring them into such a state, as well as into such a place. Here it is stiled, (*Acts* 7. 38.) the Church in the Wilderness. There were many Wildernesses betwixt Egypt and Canaan: Sometimes they were in one, sometimes in another: We read they were in the Wilderness of Shur, (*Exod.* 15. 22.) in the Wilderness of Sin, (*Exod.* 16. 1.) in the Wilderness of Sinai, (*Exod.* 19. 1.) So for particular persons. We

read of *David*, how he was tossed from one Wilderness to another: We find him in the Wilderness of *Ziph*, (1 Sam. 23. 14, 15.) and presently in the Wilderness of *Maon*; v. 24. of the same chapter. In the Wilderness of *Engedi*, (1 Sam. 24. 1.) And all this after great appearances of God for them: After he had so wonderfully saved *Israel* out of *Pharaoh's* hand and brought them out of *Egyptian* bondage, he brought them forthwith into the Wilderness. After *David* was anointed King, God ordered a Wilderness-commission for him. Possibly some will say, this was in the time of the Old Testament-dispensation, we hope better this to be the lot of the Gospel-Church. If we look into the Scriptures of the New Testament, we shall find it is the same, (*Rev.* 12. 6, 14.) The Woman is forced to flee into the Wilderness. By the Woman is meant the Church so called for her weakness, and for her fruitfulness. Even after the great deliverance she had of the Man-child she travelled with, she was ordered by God himself into this condition: And no wonder, when Christ the Head of the Church had the same. For after that glorious manifestation at his Baptism, the Father speaking by the

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audible voice, and the Holy Ghost appearing in the visible shape of a Dove, and lighting upon him, he was led up of the Spirit into the Wilderness.

Qu. 1. You will say, *In what respects is the Churches lot to be termed a Wilderness-state?*

Ans. 1. A Wilderness is a lonesome and solitary place. Hence it is said to be a Land that no man passeth through, where no man dwells, (*Jer. 2. 6. Job 38. 26.*) And thence it is that the Wilderness and solitary place are made terms synonymous, or of the same signification, (*Isa. 35. 1.*) And when the Prophet desired to retire himself from his people, that he might the better lament their sins and approaching calamities, he thus expresseth himself, (*Jer. 9. 2.*) *O that I had in the Wilderness a lodging-place of way-faring men, that I might leave my people and go from them.* 'Tis true, Some Wildernesses are habitable and inhabited, as that in which John Baptist preached, (*Mat. 3. 1.*) he went and preached in the Wilderness of Judea. He was the voice of one crying in the Wilderness, (*Isa. 40. 3.*) But though here were Towns and Cities wherein men dwelt, yet others mostly are without inhabitant. Thus is it with God's People sometimes; they are

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brought into lonesome and solitary conditions, where they can enjoy no comfortable Christian-communion. *David* complains, *That he was as a Pelican, (or Bittern, as some translate) in the Wilderness and like an Owl of the Desert: He watched, and was alone as a Sparrow upon the house top, (Psal. 102. 6, 7.)* These are solitary and mournful Birds; and so mournful are Christians when they lose the spiritual converse and communion, it being one great comfort of their lives.

2. A Wilderness is a place of fear and terrour: Solitariness breeds fear; but we add this to it, that there is not only want of suitable society, but many and great dangers by reason of wild Beasts and inhabitants there, it may well be stile the great and terrible Wilderness, as it is called, (*Dent. 1. 19. and Dent. 8. 15.*) where were fiery Serpents and Scorpions. As 'tis said of Christ when he was in the Wilderness, that he was with the wild Beasts, (*Mark 1. 13.*) We read of the Dragons of the Wilderness, (*Mal. 1. 2.*) and how mortal to the *Israelites* the stings of the Serpents were, (*Numb. 21. 6.*) The Lord sent fiery Serpents among the people, and they bit the people, and many people of *Israel* died. The world is like

Wilderness to God's people in this respect. Here is the great red Dragon, that old Serpent the Devil, as he is called, (*Rev. 12. 3, 9.*) Here are his Agents and Bayliffs, wicked and ungodly men, like wild Beasts seeking to make a prey of them that fear God, and to devour them, and all they have; to spoil their outward comforts, to take away their inward peace; to cast reproach upon their names, to deprive them of their liberties, and to shed their blood, and how then can it be otherwise than a place of fear and terror to them? Sometimes God saith, *Touch not mine Anointed, and do my Prophets no harm.* At another time he seems to summon all the wild Beasts of the Forest to devour them, (*Psal. 44. 12.*) *Thou sellest thy people for nought, and dost not increase thy wealth by their price.* Like a Captain that gives away his Souldiers by companies for nought. If God did increase the revenue of his glory by this terrible dispensation, it would give his people some satisfaction, but if otherwise, it must needs be grievous to them. *David* saith, *Lead me in a plain path because of mine Enemies:* Or observers, as in the Original. Compare this with (*Hosea 5. v. 1.*) where the Rulers of Church and State

State are charged that they had been a snare on *Mizpeh*, and a Net spread on *Tabor*. These were places not far from *Jerusalem*, where *Jeroboam* set Watches to observe who they were that went away to worship at *Jerusalem* after God's Institution, and could not with a good Conscience comply with the new devised way he had set up at *Dan* and *Bethel*, to bring them into his Net to punish them. Thus it hath been in after-ages, snares have been laid to catch conscientious men in, and bring them under severe penalties; which makes the World a terrible Wilderness to them.

3. A Wilderness is a place of wandering. This was *Israel's* condition during their forty years abode in the Wilderness, as was threatned, (*Numb. 14. 33.*) *Your Children shall wander in the Wilderness.* We read that God causeth men to wander in the Wilderness, where there is no way, (*Job 12. 24.*) Here 'tis used metaphorically: When a people are given over to mistakes and error, not knowing how to order their course, cannot arrive at their end: Like men in a howling Wilderness, that know not whither they go; every step may be back-

ward as well as forward. Not that God is active in leading men into false ways, but does permit them to be seduced, or as a punishment of his upon them for neglecting his counsel and direction, may give them up to their own straying hearts, and other seducing spirits. Even thus are God's people apt to wander, whilst in the Wilderness of this world. *I have gone astray*, saith *David*, like a *lost Sheep*, (*Psal.* 119. 176.) which of all creatures is most apt to wander, and least able to return to the Fold again. So *David* found in himself the like averfeness: Hence he prays in the same verse; *O seek thy Servant!* He it is that brings back wandring Souls at first conversion, and reduceth them from their after-straglings. Our wildrings are sent to prevent our wandrings; and this effect they had on *David*, at least to prevent his being utterly lost, (*Psal.* 119. v. 67) *Before I was afflicted, I went astray: but now I have kept thy word.* Yet so great is our proneness to this evil, that *David* prays earnestly for preventing grace as to this particular, (*Psal.* 119. 10.) *O let me not wander from thy Commandments!* The more experience any have of themselves, and of the ways of God, the

the more sensible are they of their proneness to wander, and so are more trustful of their own strength, and more earnest with God to be kept from it.

4. The Wilderness is a place of want. Hence that where *Israel* was, is said to be a place wherein was drought, where there was no water, as in the verse before the Text. And it's called a Land of drought, (*Jer. 2. 6.*) They could not plow or sow, build or plant there, and so no provision in an ordinary way could be had: No Houses, but tents only to lye in: No Raiment, but what they carried in with them was miraculously preserved from waxing old. They were also without the standing settled way of Worship, and ordinary Sacraments. Thus it is with the people of God oftentimes; they are reduced to great outward and spiritual necessities. *Israel* could speak often of dying and starving, fearing they should perish through want; so do others still. How many that are hoped to have a principle of good in them, yet fear they shall wither and come to poverty: So likewise when their Souls, they meet with a Famine hearing the Word of the Lord.

Some have ventured upon long and dangerous Voyages by Sea, and have gone even to the ends of the Earth to enjoy that way of Worship God had convinced them of. While many wicked men abound, we find Christ had not a house of his own; (though Lord of the World,) no hide his head in, nor money to discharge his occasions, but lived on the charity of others, and once sent to a Fish for money to pay the Tribute. Well may the Servants be as their Lord. We read of *David* once in such want, that he was forced to ask some relief at the hands of the Priest. So it may fall out here to any of God's people. So then in respect of solitariness, terrour, wandrings, and wants, the condition of God's people in this world may be a Wilderness-condition.

Qu. 2. *But why does it please God thus to order his peoples lot and portion here?*

Ans. 1. To humble them. There was much Pride in *Israel*; their Pride testified to their face, as the Prophet speaks, (*Hos. 7. 10.*) This sin God hates in all men, and in his own especially. Therefore he labours by all means to hide Pride from them, to lay and keep them low in their own Eyes; and if he sees this

this sin prevail in them, he will let
 this swelling, and cure this danger
 Tympany, by pricking the bladder with
 the Briars and Thorns of the Wilderness.
 When he saw *Paul* but in danger to
 exalted above measure, he sent him
 Thorn in the flesh, and the Messenger
 Satan to buffet him preventively. When
 smarting Providences did he visit *Hezekiah*
 with, when he saw his heart lifted
 up with his prosperity, till he brought
 him down to his foot, and caused him
 humble himself for the pride of his
 heart, (*2 Chron. 32.*) The Text sheweth
 this was one end of the Wilderness,
 humble them. Pride is a weed that the
 Lord will not suffer to grow in his Gar-
 den ; and though he doth not root it
 out here, yet he will use all means to
 and curb it, and keep it from spring-
 ing. Hence it is he not only ordaineth
 troubles and afflictions, but leaves
 self still remaining in his people : By
 they have conviction & experience of the
 vileness of their Natures, and are brought
 into such a Wilderness in their spirits
 so bewildered in their spiritual condition
 that they are brought to loath themselves
 for sin. As he of old dealt with the
 Egyptian Idols, who destroyed them all

one, which he kept entire, not as a Monument of Idolatry, but as a spectacle of their sin and misery: So doth God leave a stump of sin in his people, to keep them low in their own Eyes: This is his end also in all the terrours, and wants in the Wilderness of this world, which they are at any time exposed to, & exercised with.

2. To prove them and others; to discover and reveal the secrets of many hearts; so the Text intimates; to humble and to prove them: The sincerity of some, their faith and other graces: The hypocrisie, unsoundness and falseness of others. I say, partly to try the faith of them that are sincere; that the tryal of their faith, which is more precious than of Gold that perisheth, may be found to honour, praise and glory, at the appearance of Jesus Christ, (1 Pet. 1. 7.) A Believer in a day of prosperity is like a valiant Souldier in a day of Peace, who seems not to differ from a Coward or timorous man, but in a day of War his valour and wise conduct will appear: Then it is seen what manner of man he was. When true Believers are in a Land of Peace and Plenty, they seem not to differ from others; but when Wilderness-Tryals are upon them, then their faith in God's promises, their

their love to his name and ways, the holding fast the profession of his truth, their walking in some measure answerable to his holy Commands, will shew themselves. Earthly minds are set upon earthly objects, nothing affects them like temporal good; they care not for the great concerns of Religion; offer them some worldly advantage, and it will quickly be seen what their profession is; they will do any thing for gain. But God will have it known, that there is a Generation that will serve him, though it be in the wilderness, whose hearts are above these things. As a great man said, He took more glory in the honour he denied, than in that he kept. A true Christian will take as much comfort in the losses he meets with for Christ's sake, as in the things he enjoys for himself. Thus is the faith and other graces proved by the trials he meets with in the Wilderness. And partly, that the rottenness, hypocrisie, and unsoundness of others may be made manifest, is this condition ordered. Then the hearts of such be turned back to the things of sense and time; even a mixed multitude, who came out of Egypt with the *Israelites* lusted after the flesh and Garlick of *Egypt*, and caused the

ren of *Israel* to inurmure and be troubled. (*Numb. 11.4.*) *When tribulation and persecution ariseth, they are offended, (Mat. 13.21.)* and so discover their unsoundness. 'Tis true indeed, some of God's sincere people may have their faintings, their staggerings and declinings for a time, as *Peter* had, yet these recover and return by weeping-crofs, as *Peter* did. But there are too many carried away with the stream of the times, and turn their backs upon the ways of God they have sometimes owned, honoured and admired. The love of outward comforts take away the hearts of many, and therefore the great Argument some use to draw Christians off from the truth, is outward preferments, dignities and promotions, Civil or Ecclesiastical; and these take with those who know no higher and better things. That which I mean at is this; That God has alway a discovering work upon his hand by Wilderness-dispensations; he discovers the Sheep from the Goats even here: The Goats now appear to take their portion, and to hold upon their objects, whilst the sheep hear Christ's voice, and follow him, and cleave to him, a suffering Christ, a naked persecuted Christ. And this is a second reason why God orders this condition for them.

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3. To

3. To do them good in the latter. For hereby God brings them nearer himself, as it is said he did *Israel* of old when they were in the Wilderness (*Exod. 19. 4.*) He brought them to himself that is, into nearer familiarity and fellowship with himself; into greater acquaintance with the secrets and mysteries of his grace and love, into a greater manifestation and discovery of the sweetness of his communion, into larger experience of his comfortable visitations. Hence *God* saith, (*Hos. 2. 14.*) concerning his Church *Behold, I bring her into the Wilderness, and will speak comfortably unto her; or, I will speak to her heart, as it is in the Origin.* Whilst Christians are in the clutter of the world, in the noise and clamour of variety of objects and occasions here made, their ears are apt to be dull and heavy, and they not so fit to hear what *God* speaks; and therefore *God* does with them as he did with the blind man (*Mark 8. 23.*) He took him by the hand and led him out of the Town, and then cured him. So *God* brings his people to the Wilderness, and there heals many distempers, and reveals many truths, gives them experiences of himself, that they never knew or had before. These words

things stop the ears of men, and make them they cannot hear the voice of God's Word and Spirit, nor understand the voice of his Providences; therefore saith God, *I will bring them into the Wilderness, and I will speak to their hearts*: I will apply the things of my Word, and what I speak by my Providence so to their very hearts, that they shall fill and possess their hearts with joy, peace and comfort: So that what the Apostle speaks of the event and issue of God's severe dealings with *Job*, (*James 5. 11.*) *Ye have seen the end of the Lord, that he is pitiful, and of tender mercy*: That may I say concerning this Wilderness-condition God orders for his people in this world: His designs are holy and wise, and if we stay to see the issue, it will be found to be very gracious, even what we have heard from the Text, to humble and prove them, and do them good in the latter end.

Use 1. Are these things so? Then let us not be offended if we meet with such a Wilderness-condition in our way to the heavenly *Canaan*: It is no more than what *Israel* met with in their passage to the typical *Canaan*, and what the Primitive Gospel-Church went through also, and what we must expect to be our lot and

portion. Some are soon offended at the frowns and rage of violent men, but remember that it is God's way and method to lead his people into the Wilderness. Think not that therefore you are out of God's way, but know, that this will be more profitable to you, I mean, this present Wilderness, than your past Canaan ever was. The *Romanists* indeed make outward prosperity to be a note of a true Church: Like them of old, who said, (*Jer. 43. 17, 18.*) *We will burn Incense to the Queen of Heaven, and pour out drink-offerings to her, as we have done, we and our Fathers, our Kings and our Princes; for then we had plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil: But since we left off thus to do, we have wanted all things, &c.* Great is the offering of the Cross, the Thorns of the Wilderness are piercing, but blessed is he that is not offended at these. Christ has told us of this beforehand, that we might not be stumbled, (*Joh. 16. 1.*) Let us not be troubled those that think it strange, but be prepared for it.

Use 2. This should cause us to be weaned from, and dead unto this present evil world. Who would be fond of a Wilderness, or set his heart upon it? O let us labour to get our affections crucified to it.

as *Paul* saith, he was, (*Galat. 6. 14.*)
 let our Souls be as a weaned child, as
David saith his was, (*Psal. 131. 2.*)
 who would not be weaned from the milk,
 and drawn from the breasts? Who-
 would embrace and hug a wilderness, the
 briars and thorns, the lusts and cares of
 which will pierce us through with many
 sorrows? It's observable, that it was
 the Devil who represented the world to
 Christ as a glorious object, (*Mat. 4. 8.*) *He*
shewed him all the Kingdoms of the world, and
the glory of them. God shews us the world
 as a vain, deceitful, defiling, and perish-
 ing thing; If we look into the glass of
 the Scripture, we shall find it thus set
 forth to us: Let us therefore leave vio-
 lent contentions for earthly things to
 them whose names are written in the
 earth, and have their portion in this life.
 Not that God requires us absolutely to
 relinquish our outward estates, and be
 retired from the world, as the Papists
 teach, and some among them seem to
 practise, but to have our affections dead
 to them, to desire neither poverty nor
 riches, but if God please to give us food
 convenient for us, to be therewith con-
 tent, remembering what the world is,
 and our state in it a wilderness-state.

Use 3. Here is yet some comfort to the Church and People of God; which is in three things; (1.) They are not to be alwaies thus; They shall at length come out of their wilderness-condition into the paradise above. The Church is set forth (*Cant.* 8. 5.) to be coming up from the Wilderness. 'Tis true, as *Israel* passed over *Jordan* before they could come into *Canaan*, so must Gods People pass through the valley of the shadow of death, ere they can arrive in the heavenly *Canaan*. Yet as they of old passed over safely, shall the Saints here, they shall not drown in this *Jordan*, because God is with them. (2.) They may send out and search the good land, and get some first fruits of the heavenly Countrey even here. As *Israel* sent Spies to search out the land of *Canaan* of old, who brought some of the fruits of the land for a taste; so may Gods People send faith and hope as Spies to view the Land above, and bring thence some bunches of Grapes, some clusters of comfort from thence for a foretaste. Indeed some of the Spies of old brought an evil report upon the land of *Canaan* and spake of the walled Cities, and the tall Giants the mighty Sons of *Anak* that they saw there, & did so weaken the hearts

the People ; But the Spiritual Spies I named can bring no such reports of the heavenly *Canaan* ; for there are no Sons of *Anak* there, no Enemies to combate with, as there was in that of old ; The Enemies are here in the Wilderness of this world, and if once you pass the brink of death, the last enemy to be destroyed, you are at rest in that glorious and pleasant Countrey for ever, (3.) There is this Comfort also, That God cares and provides for his Church in their present condition, until they arrive there, which is the second Doctrine.

Doct. 2. *That God doth and will certainly provide for his Church and People in their Wilderness-Condition.* Thus the Lord cared for *Israel* of old, which he would have them not forget : Who fed thee in the Wilderness with Manna, saith the text. So he did for the Gospel-Church, (*Rev.* 12. 6, 14.) He prepared a place for the woman in the Wilderness that they should feed her there. He provides all things needful for his People here. I will name two or three Particulars.

1. He provides a place for them there. He did for *Israel* of old : Tents they had, though no settled abode, no houses,

because they were moving up and down from place to place. So in the place named before, the woman had a place in the Wilderness prepared of God. Though but Tents, yet suitable to the place, for here they have no continuing City. *In my fathers house*, says Christ, *many Mansions*, (*John 14. 2.*) *a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens* (*2 Cor. 5. 1.*) Here therefore Tents should content them. So were they of old, *Heb. 11. 38.*) though they wandered in deserts, and mountains, and caves of the earth. So long as God hath work for them, doing or suffering work, he will have a Room, a place for them. When *Luthers* enemies asked him, where he would be when such a great person came into Germany to see for him? He answered, *Aut sub coelo Aut in caelo*: Either under Heaven, or Heaven; So may all Gods People say.

2. He provides leading and direction for his People in and through the Wilderness of this world. Thus he did for *Israel* of old, (*Exod. 13. 21,*) *The Lord went before them by a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way, and by night a pillar of fire to give them light to go by day and by night*: He took not away the

star of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire
 by night, from before his People. Thus
 he is said to have led them in the Wilder-
 ness, in the verse before the text. Though
 he led them about, this way and that way,
 yet the right way that they might go to a
 City of habitation, (*Psal.* 107. 4, 5.) They
 had many turns and returns, backward and
 forward, yet arrived at a happy end, and
 were conducted to their desired rest: So
 it is still: The Word and the Spirit, and
 the Providence of God, are the pillars, as
 it were, by which God provides and
 gives counsel, guidance and direction to
 his People as they travel through the
 Wilderness of this world. *As many as*
are led by the Spirit of God, are the Sons of
God, (Rom. 8. 14.) So it is as true reci-
 procally: As many as are the Sons of
 God, are led by the Spirit of God. And
 indeed so it guided *Israel* of old, (*Isa.*
 63. 11, 12, 13, 14.) *Where is he that put*
his Spirit within him? That led them by the
right hand of Moses with his glorious arm?
That led them through the deep as an horse
in the Wilderness that they should not stumble?
As a beast goeth down into the valley, so the
Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest. God
 made *Moses* a guide to *Israel*, but it was
 the Spirit of God that led *Moses*, and
 instructed

instructed him to lead the People; So in Gospel-days, and therefore Christ tells his following Disciples, (John 16. 13.) that when he is come he will lead them into all truth. So likewise by his word he leads them: He hath ordained it to be a light to their feet, and a Lamp to their Path, (Psal. 119. 105.) The Spirit is a voice behind them, and the Word is a rule before them. And by his providence also he doth direct them. Hence it is termed the eye of God, because by it God guides his People in all the revolutions and turnings of this world. *I will instruct thee,* said God to his servant, (Psal. 32. vers. 8.) *in the way in which thou shouldest go.* I will guide thee with mine eye: His providential eye. If any say, How is it then that they wander and miscarry, as sad experience shews? I answer, Not from any defect in Gods provision, but either because they will not follow the conduct of heaven, wilfulness sometimes occasions wanderings; Or because God for their sin doth withdraw or suspend his leading and guiding influences from them and then they go astray. It is said, (2 Chron. 32. 31.) That in the business of the Ambassadors of the Princes of Babylon

God left *Hezekiah*, &c. And how soon did he stumble and fall? When pride and self-confidence prevail in them, as it did in him & in *Peter*, then God's provoked to remove his direction from them. Yet this is never totally and absolutely taken from them, but God will reduce them and recover them, and never cease leading them in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the Paths of Judgment, till he hath caused all those that love him to inherit substance, as it is said (*Prov.* 8. 20, 21.)

3. He provides food and raiment for them: I say, food both for their Bodies and Souls. So he did for *Israel* of old, as the text shews. He fed them in the Wilderness with Manna. What the Manna was we read, (*Exod.* 16. & *1 Cor.* 10. & *John* 6. largely.) It was the bread that the Lord gave *Israel* from the Clouds to eat. There was no plowing and sowing in the Wilderness, and so no ordinary provision; God therefore gave them Manna miraculously and extraordinarily; They did eat Angels food, saies the Psalmist; Excellent food it was, if Angles needed, they could desire no better. Thus wonderfully did he feed *Israel* forty years together in the
Wilder-

Wilderness. And this was not food only for their Bodies, but for their Souls also. Hence it is said to be Spiritual meat, in that place beforenamed, (*1 Cor. 10.*) *They did all eat the same Spiritual meat.* Because the Manna was an eminent Type of Christ, as is largely set forth by Christ himself, (*John 6.*) It was one of the Jews extraordinary Sacraments, which sealed up to Believers their Spiritual nourishment in grace by the free Covenant of God in the *Messiah*. He also secured their Cloths from waxing old by a miracle. And he is not worse to his Gospel-Church than to *Isreal*. There is a general care God hath of all his Creatures; He feeds the Ravens when they cry unto him : He gives all his Creatures their meat in due season ; He opens his hands, and satisfies the desire of every living thing : (*Psal. 145. 15, 16.*) There is a more particular care he takes of man, but yet exerciseth a more special and peculiar providence over his Church and People. So he provided for *David* in his straits : He sent a Raven with bread and flesh morning and evening to feed *Elijah*, (*1. Kings 17. 4, 6.*) And in the same Chapter we read how wonderfully he provided for the widow of *Zarephath* ;
when

when she had but a handfull of meal in the barrel, and a little oil in the cruise; he by a miracle increased it, so that it failed not till God sent rain on the earth. So Christ miraculously multiplied the loaves that he might feed the People in the Wilderness, (*Matth. 15.*) And as for the bodies, so for the Souls of his servants, he still feeds them in all their straits. If the ordinary means of grace fail he can provide extraordinarily. Hence it is said, God had prepared that they, (namely, the two Prophets spoken of, (*Rev. 11.*) should feed the Woman in the Wilderness, (*Rev. 12. 6, 14.*) They should feed those hidden ones with the hidden Manna. So he promiseth to feed his people *Israel* with the heritage of *Jacob* their Father, (*Isa. 58. 14.*) that is, with spiritual communications of the Covenant of Grace. And again, (*Zech. 11. 7.*) *I will feed the flock of slaughter, even you O poor of the flock.* An afflicted and poor people, designed to slaughter and ruine; who have lost your visible pastures, the Ordinances: I will be your Shepherd; and will feed you invisibly by my Word and Spirit, ye shall go in and out and find pastures. So in several verses of the 34th of *Ezekiel*, we have promises to the same purpose.

purpose. And *David* having the Lord for his Shepherd, concludes he shall want no good thing; he shall be fed in green pastures, and led beside the still waters (*Psal. 23. 12.*) That is, God would give him enough, food sufficient; so is food and water to the Sheep; yea the best condition and daintiest provision; so green pastures, and still waters: Or as the Original hath it, pastures of tender grass and waters of quietness, such as are eminently restorative; for it follows, *He restoreth my Soul.* This is the care God taketh to provide for his in their Wilderness state.

Quest. You will say, *Why will God thus provide for his Church and People?*

Ans. 1. Because they are the people of his Covenant, and so he stands in Covenant-relations to them, (*Psal. 111. 5.*) It's said, He giveth them their meat in due season that fear him; he will ever be mindful of his Covenant. He is related to them as a Father, & if a Father be asked for Bread by a Son, will he give him a Stone? saith Christ, *Your heavenly Father knoweth ye have need of these things,* (*Matth. 6. 32.*) Will an affectionate Father see his child want, when he is able to supply him? The Apostle saith, (*1 Tim. 5. 8.*) If

man provide not for his own, especially for those of his house, (or kindred, as it is in the Margin,) he hath denied the Faith, & is worse than an Infidel. And will not God much more provide for his Covenant-people, who thus lays it upon men as their duty to look to their own, and so severely sentences them that neglect it? Surely he will. This *Israel* found, (*Psal.* 105. 40, 41, 42.) The people asked, and he brought Quails; and satisfied them with the Bread of Heaven, &c. For he remembered his holy promise, and *Abraham* his Servant.

2. Because God is sufficiently qualified to provide for them: He hath an all-seeing eye, a compassionate heart, and an almighty hand: These three render him able, and fit, and willing to do it. I say, 1.) An all-seeing eye; *For the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good,* (*Prov.* 15. 3.) And these eyes of the Lord do therefore run to and fro the whole heart, that he may observe how it is with his Church, and take care for them, (*2 Chron.* 16. 9.) When *Hagar* fainted down, and lifted up her voice and wept, because the water in the bottle was spent, (*Gen.* 21. 15, 16.) and they were now in the Wilderness, a dry and thirsty Land, where

where little expectation of supply
 be had; God saw the affliction of *Abraham*
 and her Son, and opened her eyes, and
 saw a Well of Water, *v. 19*. With this
 vidence she was much affected, as you
 see, (*Gen. 16. 13.*) She called the name
 the Lord that spake unto her; *Thou*
seest me; for she said, *Have I not*
looked after him that seeth me? Where
 the Well was called *Beer-lakairoi*; that
 the Well of him that lives and sees
 because God had so seen her in her
 ction, as to provide graciously for
 (2.) A pitiful and compassionate heart.
 Some see the wants and necessities
 others, yet have no bowels of compassion
 and so make no provision, give no relief.
 Such were the Priest & Levite we read of
 (*Luk. 10. 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35.*) When they
 the man stripped of his raiment, and wounded
 the Priest passed by on the other side, the
 vite looked on him, and passed away likewise.
 when the Samaritan saw him, he had comp
 sion on him, bound up his wounds, pouring
 Oil and Wine, &c. Christ is the good
 maritan, who hath compassion on the souls
 and bodies of them that are in want, and
 provides suitably and graciously for them.
 He had compassion on the peoples for
 (*Mat. 9. 36, 37, 38.*) when he saw many

tudes fainted, and were scattered abroad as Sheep having no Shepherd, and said, *The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.* So was he moved with pity and compassion to the bodies of the people that were fasting in the Wilderness, (*Matth. 15. 32.*) with him three days, *I will not send them away fasting, says he, lest they faint by the way,* (3.) An almighty hand. Some have knowledge of their Childrens wants, and hearts to pity them, and yet it is not in the power of their hand to supply their needs. As we read *Hagar* saw her Childs danger, and shewed the compassions of a tender Mother, yet could not help and relieve him, or her self; but God hath an omnipotent hand, and can do what he will in Heaven and in Earth; he can rain Manna from Heaven, and give Water out of the Rock, as he did to *Israel* in the Wilderness. And thus he represents himself to *Abraham*, (*Gen. 17. 1.*) *I am God almighty.* And being thus qualified, he will surely provide for all his people.

3. Because he knows that by so doing, he provides for his own glory. Hence it is that when *Abraham* had that question put to him by his Son, *Where is the Lamb*
I for

for a burnt-offering? He answered, My Son, God will provide himself a Lamb, &c. (Gen. 22. 7, 8.) There is an emphasis in that word, *Himself*. For the answer to the question had been full, if it had been omitted, and he only had said, God will provide a Lamb. But when he puts in that phrase, *Himself*, it is very significant; it is as much as if he had said, My Son, that God who commands me to go and offer a Sacrifice, will not fail to provide me a Lamb, for otherwise he should not provide for his own glory, which he will not lose. It is not for the honour of a Father to bring his children into straits, and leave them there without suitable and necessary provision, God should not consult his own glory if he should do otherwise, and therefore I doubt not, nor will you have the question, but he will provide himself a Lamb for a burnt-offering. Moses told the People in the Wilderness that they should see the glory of the Lord (Exod. 16. 7.) Though the place in which he primarily respect the glory of his Justice for their murmurings, yet it is true likewise that they did see the glory of his goodness and mercy, in providing bread and water when they were in a starving condition; These are the reasons of this Doctrine.

Obje

Object. Some will say, *We see not this made good, sometimes Gods people are in great wants and straits, and none more than they.*

Answ. God's provisions of the things of this life, are so ordered, as to further, and not hinder the spiritual and eternal salvation of his people, and there are times of Tryal, as here he tried *Israel* in the Wilderness, as the Text shews. God will have it manifest whether we serve him for Loaves or for Love; whether we will cleave to him and his ways in straits and necessities. Sometimes the iniquities of God's people hinders good things from them, (*Jer. 5. 25.*) For God promises these things as the fruits of that faith and Obedience he requires of his servants. On these and such like accounts, God sees it good to cut them short of these things.

Use 2. Are these things so? Then this shews us the great evil of doubting, and distrust found among God's people in any straits they come into. This is a common infirmity among them. They are ready to cry out, What shall we do? How shall we be provided for? When they are in straits as to temporals, this is their Language; What shall we eat? What shall we drink? Wherewithal shall

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shall we be clothed? As *Isaac* said, *Where is the Lamb?* so they, *Where is food? and where is raiment?* We are friendless and helpless, and we shall starve and perish. Such is their Language as to *Spirituals*, when they see *Ministers* and *Ordinances* fail; What shall become of our Souls? How shall our spiritual life be preserved? We shall die and perish by the hand of *Saul*, as *David* said, (*1 Sam. 27. 1.*) We shall fall and miscarry in the hand of our temptations; our corruptions, (like the Sons of *Zeruiab* to *David*,) are too hard, too strong for us. But I may say to such, as *Christ* did to *Peter*, *O thou of little faith! wherefore didst thou doubt?* (*Matth. 14. 31.*) Or to his Disciples, who in a Storm at Sea feared drowning, *Why are ye fearful O ye of little faith?* This was *Israel's* sin of old. (*Psal. 78. 19, 20.*) Can God furnish a Table for us in the Wilderness? Can he give bread? Can he provide flesh for our people? What a provoking evil is this of unbelief, and yet how common a thing is it even in those that profess the Lord's Name? We read of *Israel's* Infidelity in many places, (*Exod. 14. 11.*) They said to *Moses*, because there were no *Gods* in *Egypt*, *Hast thou taken us away*

in the Wilderness? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the Wilderness. Thus full of unbelief were they, and yet God does appeal to their Consciences in this matter, (Jer. 2. 31.) Have I been a Wilderness unto you, or a Land of Darkness? I have rather been a Paradise to you; you have been a Wilderness to me, and not I unto you: I have been wanting in no good thing to you. This unbelief is such a contempt of God, and provocation to him, (the day of temptation in the Wilderness was a day of provocation, Heb. 3. 8.) that he swears in his wrath they shall not enter into his rest, in verse 11. He made their carcases to fall in the Wilderness, and they could not enter in because of unbelief, in vers. 17, 19. O the evil and danger of this sin! It deprived Israel of the Land of Canaan; yea, Moses because of his fretting, never could set his foot in that Countrey. And how smart a dispensation was that upon that great person we read of, (2 Kings 4. 2.) The Lord by his Prophet had retold a sudden great plenty to come, for the Famine was now sad and grievous (Samaria,) this great man instead of entertaining this comfortable news with

faith and thankfulness, rejected it with
 scorn and disdain, and a bold presum-
 tuous question full of unbelief: *If the*
Lord would make windows in Heaven,
this thing be? As if he had said; If he
 thus do, yet this plenty could not be.
 plainly contradicts the Prophets word.
 He questions both the Power and the
 Truth of God; he denies both his Al-
 lity and his Veracity, and it is a speech
 that hath too much blasphemy in it: It
 not only speaks as if the thing it self were
 unlikely, but plainly that the Lord him-
 self could not do it: Therefore his ques-
 tion meets with a terrible answer; *Be-*
hold, thou shalt see it with thine Eyes,
thou shalt not eat thereof. Thus Infidelity
 deprives men of the comfort of what God
 hath promised. All things are possible
 to him that believeth, but nothing is possible
 to him that believes not. And this ex-
 agravated this great mans misery,
 though he should see this plenty, yet he
 should not eat of it: To come so near
 the mercy, and yet not to partake of it
 is the greater misery. The sum of all
 comes to this, to fright us all from
 doing to do with this provoking sin of
 unbelief. As the Apostle exhorts
 cautions us, to take heed lest our sel-

fall after the same example of unbelief, (*Heb. 4. 11.*) So let us be the more heedful, because we are least suspicious of ourselves in this particular. Every one is ready to think he believes the power and truth of God, till it comes to the tryal, and then there is too much questioning these things. This is evident in that we can believe God in little matters, but not in greater and more difficult; whereas his power can effect the hardest as well as the easiest. Is there any thing too hard for the Lord? Is not he faithful that hath promised? Shall we be like *Thomas*, who would believe no further than he saw? The Lord heal our unbelief.

Use 2. Suffer the word of Exhortation. If God provides for his people in all their Wilderness-conditions, Then let them be found faithful in Wilderness-work and duty. Particularly, (1.) Be thankful to God for his care of you, and provisions for you in all your straits. Say as *David*, *Bless the Lord O my Soul, and forget not all his benefits*, who remembered thee in thy low estate, when no man cared for thy Soul. (2.) Go not back from him, turn not aside from following him in thy duty, though it be through difficulty. This God commends in *Israel* of old,

old, (*Fer. 2. 2.*) *I remember the kindness of thy youth, the love of their Espousals, how thou wentest after me in the Wilderness.* O Repent not of your engagements for God; Say not as some of these murmurers did, Let us go back again to *Egypt*, to our Onions and Garlick, to our sins and lusts, to our Superstitions and Idolatries again. But rather let us say as *Jephthah*, (*Judges 11. 35.*) *I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back.* When we fall into days of great backsliding, we should think we hear Christ speaking to us, as he did to his Apostles; (*Joh 6. 66, 67, 68.*) When many of the Disciples of Christ went back from him, and walked no more with him; he said to the Apostles, *Will ye also go away?* Peter answered, *Lord, To whom should we go?* O let a *Caleb-like* spirit be in us, that we may follow the Lord fully! O that we could by this approve our selves to be the Sheep of Christ indeed, by hearing his voice, and following him, and not following strangers, nor knowing the voice of strangers, (*John 10. 4, 5.*) Strange Doctrines, strange Worship, that is, such Doctrines and Worship as are strange to the holy Scriptures, let us not receive them, nor those that bring them. Never is there more need
 Sheep

Sheep should listen to the voice of their Shepherd, and follow him, than when they are in a waste howling Wilderness, apt of themselves to go astray, and so ready to be devoured by the Beasts of prey : We should therefore pray with the Spouse, (*Cant. 1. 7.*) *Tell me O thou whom my Soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy Flock to rest at noon? for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the Flocks of thy Companions? (3.)* To conclude all ; *Trust in the Lord for ever ;* This is Wilderness-work ; In the greatest straits, and most amazing distresses, when we are stript of all humane helps, and ordinary means fail, yet believe that God will provide for our Bodies, for our Souls, for our Families, for his Church and People ; Casting all our care on him, for he careth for us, (*1 Pet. 5. 7.*) In all our exigencies, let us roll our selves on God, and go up from this Wilderness leaning on our Beloved, (*Cant. 8. 5.*) This is God's Command, (*Psal. 37. 3.*) *Trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the Land, and verily thou shalt be fed.* Hereby we give God his greatest honour, (*Rom. 4. 20.*) *Abraham* was strong in faith, giving glory to God. This is the way to be delivered out of straits, (*Exod.*

(Exod. 14. 13.) *Stand still* (namely, in way of faith and dependance) *and ye shall see the salvation of the Lord.* Faith will be our best Anchor, staying our Souls upon God and his Promise, (Isa. 26. 3.) *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.* We know not how great the wants and straits are we may be reduced unto. Remember this Example in the Text now before us. Ordinary means failed, but God provided extraordinarily. He hath wonderful ways to provide for his Children: He can make a little go a great way, as when he multiplied the Loaves by a Miracle: He can cause the coarsest food to be as good nourishment as the best dainties, witness *Daniel's* pulse: He can by unexpected ways bring relief. When *Musculus* that famous Divine wanted bread for his Family, and made those Verses in his straits, which are as follows:

*Est Deus in cœlis, qui providus omnia curat
Nunquam credentes deseruisse potest.*

In English thus; *There is a God in Heaven who hath a provident care for all creatures, and cannot forsake those that*

live in him. As he was thus exercising himself in a way of Faith, one sent him a Loaf of Bread, which relieved him and his Family. And in the Massacre at Paris, was one *Merlin* nourished fourteen days together by an Egg a day laid by an Hen that came constantly to that Hawmow, where he lay hid from danger. Only, let us labour to be *Israelites* indeed, for such shall want no good thing. Let us come into the Wilderness, as *Israel* did, by following God's Word and Spirit, and not by neglecting God's Rule, not by prodigal expensive courses, or idleness and neglect of our Callings. Let us use all good and lawful means to provide for our selves. *Israel* took pains to gather the Manna daily, and to bake it in Pans, and fit it for their eating. We must also pray for provision, as Christ teacheth us in the Pattern he gave his Disciples, to say, *Give us this day our daily bread*; and then let us trust in the Lord, and by Faith leave the event with him, he will take care for us. As Mr. *Hern* a worthy Minister of the Gospel said to his Wife when he was nigh death, and she with divers Children like to be left in a low condition, weeping by him; he sought to quiet her with these words;
Peace

Peace Sweet-heart, That God that feeds the Ravens will not starve the Hens: would I say here; That God who fed *Israel* with Manna in the Wilderness will not fail to feed those that trust in him, with food convenient for them in their greatest straits and necessities.

Comfort your selves and one another with these things.

S E R M O N I V.

Nahum i. 7.

The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble, and he knoweth them that trust in him.

SOME say this Prophet was born at *Eksosh*, a small Town in *Galilee*, and there named *Nahum*, which signifies a Comforter; And so he was to Gods people: He speaks indeed terrible things against Gods enemies in the 2, 3, 4, and 6, verses: He shews how dreadful the wrath of God would be against the *Ninevites*, and the *Assyrians* for their great

great wickedness; Yet so as he also declares how comfortably God would manifest himself to his people in all their troubles, in the words of the text, *The Lord is good, &c.* Wherein he gives us, (1.) A description of Gods nature in general; *The Lord is good.* (2.) An account wherein he is ready to express this goodness to *Israel* in particular; Which is set down in two things. (1.) He is a strong hold; (2.) He knows them that trust in him, in a day of trouble. The notes observable are these. (1.) That the Lord is good. (2.) That the Church and people of God have (or may expect to meet with) a day of trouble. (3.) That God is a strong hold for them in that troublous time. (4.) That God knows them that trust in him in the day of trouble. Of these in order.

Doct. 1. *That the Lord is Good.* This is expressly in the Text. To open this briefly in two things.

1. He is good in himself, and so there is a threefold goodness in him as learned men observe. (1.) *Bonitas naturalis*, The goodness of his nature, which is the perfection of it, a perfect being. Thus it is taken, (*Exod. 33. 19.*) When *Moses* prays, *I beseech thee shew me thy glory;*
says

says God, *I will make all my goodness before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee, &c.* Compare with (Chap. 34. 5, 6.) The Lord descended in the cloud, and proclaimed the name of the Lord, *The Lord, The Lord, God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth.* This is that goodness which is the beauty and perfection of his nature. (2.) *Bonitas moralis*, This is the rectitude of his will. Persons and things are said to be good when they are conformable to Gods will, (Acts 11. 24.) 'Tis said in this sense of Barnabas *he was a good Man*: And (Rom. 7. 19.) of the Law, *that it is holy, just, and good*. (3.) *Bonitas benignitatis*, (Jer. 31. 12.) *The shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord*, goodness of bounty and beneficence, which is a natural propension to communicate to his creatures according to their several capacities. I call it a natural propension or inclination, because it is in him essentially, (Luke. 18. 19.) *None is good save one that is God.* It inclines him to communicate. *Thou art good, and thou dost good* (Psal. 119. 68.) This he doth to all creatures; *The Lord is good to all*, (Psal. 145. 9.) Yet especially to his own people. Therefore.

2. He is good to us, as he is our good; with reference to our enjoyment of him. He is the ultimate good of his people, which constituteth their happiness. And happiness is the rest the Soul takes in an object so full of real good, as is able to satisfy all its desires. And God is this object, considered in his perfections, and that in relation to our concernments. Consider our happiness as spiritual, it lies in supplies of grace and peace, or as temporal, so it lies in preservation and provision; Now God is such a good as suits all our necessities, and so satisfies all our desires, and consequently constitutes our happiness. This is evident in that he is a God al sufficient; (*Gen. 17. 1.*) *I am God, El Shaddai*) *Al sufficient*; *Shew us the Father*, saith Philip, (*John 14. 8.*) *and it sufficeth us.* And God calls upon his people, (*Psal. 81. 10.*) *Open thy mouth wide*, and promiseth that he will fill it. *Omne bonum in summo bono*, All good is in the chief good: By way of eminency; all good is in him virtually. *As having nothing, yet possessing all things*, (*2 Cor. 6. 10.*) The scattered excellencies of creatures meet in him. All is in him Originally, the creatures add nothing to him. Hence if we delight our selves in the Lord, he will

will give us the desires of our hearts. He is the chief good by way of efficacy, as he can create all that which he pleaseth to be good for us. He is the Father of mercies, (2 Cor. 1. 3.) As a Father he hath a procreating power, he gives a blessing to what he pleaseth. He calleth them that are not as though they were, (Rom. 4. 17.) He is the God of all grace, (1 Pet. 5. 10.) to implant it; He can make the stones raise up children unto Abraham, (Matth. 3. 9.) To increase it, (2 Cor. 8.) God is able to make all grace abound towards you. To preserve it; He sufficeth not Faith or any grace to fail. So comfort; He is the God of all consolation, and can fill our hearts with all joy and peace in believing, (Rom. 15. 13.) So for temporal good; He can preserve us from trouble and in trouble. He will provide for us in all our straits and wants. *My son, God will provide*, said Abraham to Isaac. And this almighty power of God is of himself, and he hath power to communicate as he pleaseth. And by communication his fulness cannot be exhausted. I might yet enlarge this by shewing how Good he is in his outgoings in Christ in whom he hath suited himself to the happiness of our Souls. He hath

help for us upon that mighty one, (*Psal.* 89. 19.) In him there is perfection of righteousness for peace and reconciliation. (*Heb.* 7. 2.) He is first King of righteousness, & then also King of peace. A righteousness which answereth the obligation of the Law; In him also there is fulness of Spirit to quicken and renew; and indeed it hath pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, (*Col.* 1. 19.) I might shew how good he is in his Word; called the good Word of God, (*Heb.* 5. 6.) And in his Ordinances, by conveying great and good things. And in his providences of mercy and correction ordering them and bringing good out of them. But briefly to apply this truth.

Use 1. Let us all try whether we have propriety in this good. Now saving interest is only by Covenant. Without Christ and without God are all that are strangers to the Covenant of promise, (*Eph.* 2. 12.) If any say, How shall we know we are in covenant? I onely say; When we are subdued to the terms of it, faith and holy obedience, when the promises of it are in any measure of truth fulfilled in us: Hath God given us his spirit? Is his law in truth written upon our hearts? Are our Souls sprinkled
K with

with his clean water promised to
viz. the blood and grace of Ch
 justifying, and sanctifying grace?
 our Souls flee to the Covenant for c
 fort in all our troubles, as *David*
 (2 Sam. 23. 5.) *He hath made with*
an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all th
and sure : These are good signs.

Use 2. Of Exhortation. (1.) Let
 get an experimental knowledge of
 Lord as Good. *O taste and see that*
Lord is good, (Psal. 34. 8.) Every one
 fires good, *Who will shew us any good*
 the voice of all men, (Psal. 4. 6.) O
 us press after a clear, affecting, exp
 mental knowledge of God our d
 good. This will bring our Souls to
 mire him, and set him up in his excell
 and to chuse God for our portion,
 love him, to cleave to him, to fol
 after him, and to long for him. T
 will bring our Souls to rest and sat
 ction, and make us blefs our selves
 God, and make our boast of God : He
 by he will be all in all unto us, and
 both in the presence and enjoyment
 all things, and in the absence and w
 of all things ; patient in tribulation, c
 tented in losses and wants, chearfi
 straits. So it was with *David* in t

various straits he was in ; (1 Sam. 30. 6.)
He encouraged himself in the Lord his
God. (2.) Let us carry it well and suitably
towards so good a God in all duty and
service : To fear the Lord and his good-
ness, (Hos. 3. 5.) Fear to sin against so
good a God, and lest we should not sui-
tably improve, and walk worthy of his
goodness ; Let us not despise or any way
abuse the riches of his goodness. Let not
our eye be evil, or our ways evil, because
he is good, but let us rather imitate
his goodness, he doth good even to his
very enemies, (Matth. 5. 45.) So let us,
if our enemy hunger, feed him, if he
thirst, give him drink. Let our work
be to go up and down doing good, as
Christ did. And let not the common
goodness of God content us ; greatly
thankful we should be for it, but not
rest in it. Let us say as David, (Psal.
106. 4.) *Remember us with the favour thou
showest to thy people, &c.* (3.) Let this
comfort Gods people, for so good is
God, that no good thing will he withhold
from them that walk uprightly, (Psal. 84.
11.) *They that fear the Lord shall want no
good thing,* (Psal. 34. 10.) Some may say,
we see many such in great want, and un-
der many evils and troubles. Let such

know and consider; (1.) It is because they are wanting to themselves; They are not in the exercise of Faith, nor close walking with God. These will withhold good things from them. *Acquaint thy self with God, so shall good come to thee, (Job 22.21.)* (2.) The state of God's people is not to be judged by outward appearance. They have a better good than this world's good. They enjoy spiritual good things; God saith, I will satiate the weary Soul with goodness; with the goodness of his house even of his holy Temple. This Strangers meddle not with: It is better than all the good things of their own house. (3.) The time of their full enjoyment of God is not yet come. Then they will say, as it is, *(Psal 31. 19.) O how great thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, for them that trust in thee before the Sons of men!* So much for the first note.

Doct. 2. *That the Church and People of God have a day of Trouble.* This is here implied, in that God is said to be their strong hold in the day of trouble, it supposes they had such a day. The Prophet it thou hast hath a particular respect to *Hezekiah*; he had a day of trouble, of rebuke and

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phemy, when *Senacherib* the King of *Assyria* came up against him, as is evident in the Prophet *Isaiab*, (*chap. 37. 3.*) And thus it hath been, is, or may be with God's people; they have their days of trouble, a cloudy and dark day, as *Ezekiel* calls it, a showry, a rainy day. As they have their days of Sun-shine, of Joy and Mercy; so a day of Affliction, a stormy and tempestuous day. All kind of trouble is here understood; outward and inward trouble, little and great troubles. As they have a day of prosperity, so likewise of adversity. The Church of Christ is his body; in every natural body there are many members; sometime the head akes, or the eye smarts, the arm is sore, the foot is wounded, the heart is heavy, then great must needs be the trouble of the body: So here, one member of Christs body lies in the prison, others are oppressed and ruined in their Estates, others banished, others put to death; great must needs be the trouble of the body of Christ when it is thus. *Elijah* lamented his trouble, being persecuted by *Jezabel*, (*1 Kings 19.*) *Job*, an upright member, had many troubles, like the waves of the Sea, one upon another; his Estate gone, his Children slain, his Wife and Friends

prove his Enemies and Troubles, shooting his Arrows at him, and seeming to be against him; great was his trouble. *Jacob, David, Paul*, and others confirm this truth to us. Here I briefly shew, (1.) The Times when (2.) The Reasons why it is thus.

Qu. 1. Ye will say, *When, or at what special Times hath the Church a day of trouble?*

Ans. 1. When their hearts grow high and proud under mercies, then usually follows a day of trouble. God gives great favours to his people, exalts them in priviledges, and they are lifted up in pride, wax wanton under them, then comes great trouble. Thus it was with *Hiram*, who, (as I hinted before) is particularly spoken of, he was under great mercies, raised from a low and weak condition by sickness, his heart was lifted up in pride, then comes a day of trouble upon him: He shewed the Embassadors of the King of *Babylon* all his Treasures in a vain-glorious boasting way, therefore all was carried away from him. *David* was advanced, his Mountain was strengthened, he upon this grew secure and proud, he said he should not be moved, and thereupon drew upon him a day of great trouble and adversity.

adversity. To have our hearts lifted up in the ways of God, as *Jehosaphat's* was, under many and extraordinary mercies, is excellent indeed; but to be lifted up above measure, as *Paul* found a proneness in himself to be under his revelations, is very sinful; God will prick this bladder swollen with pride by some thorn in the flesh, to take us down again, for his Soul so lifted up is not upright in him as the Prophet speaks.

2. When the people of God are in some measure fitted and prepared for trouble, then they may expect a day of trouble. Its a great misery and judgment to have mercies or troubles when we are unprepared for either. But God is very good to his people in this, that he gives them both when they are fitted for them, to be better by them, to improve mercies and troubles. He knows their frame, and will not put new wine into old bottles, nor lay heavy burdens on weak shoulders, but proportions the burden to the back, his strokes unto their strength, that they may be able to bear it, (1 Cor. 10. 13.) The woman is not put to flee into the Wilderness, (Rev. 12. 6, 14.) till she hath wings given her to fit her for the flight, and a place

prepared of God that they should for her there. When God hath given much grace, then comes a day of trouble to Christians to the use of that grace. As God will not over-burden them, so he will not undervalue them. If they have great grace to bear great troubles, they must expect them.

3. When his people lean to their own understandings, and follow their own devices, not consulting God, nor taking his counsel, then let them expect a day of trouble: When they will be wise in their own conceit, and betake themselves to their own inventions, neglecting to frequent his counsel, they alwaies meet with trouble. Did you ever read of any people thus doing, and escape it? God would have *Jonah* go and preach to *Nineveh* what he bad him, but he runs to his own ways, and goes to *Tharshish*; Did he escape trouble? O the great affliction he was involved in! Thrown, as we were, into the belly of hell, for his disobedience to the God of heaven, and following his own contrivances to avoid trouble, he brought himself into far greater troubles. Never did any good man lie easy upon that pillow which was their own laying, or sleep well on the

ed which was of their own making. Though *Jacob* was designed to have the blessing, yet when he yielded to his Mother to endeavour the attaining it by lying and dissembling, what abundance of trouble did he bring upon himself by it? Therefore trust in the Lord for ever, and lean not to thine own understanding.

4. When God intends to raise and advance his people, he will bring a day of trouble upon them to fit and prepare them for it. A man that purposeth to build a house high, will lay the foundation low. So God inflicts much trouble upon his servants, and brings them low by afflictions, because he intends to advance and advantage them thereby. By the oppressions of *Egypt*, and by the perils and troubles of the *Wilderness*, he prepared *Israel* for the Land of *Canaan*. Before *Joseph* had a golden Chain put about his neck, and was raised to honour by *Pharaoh*, he must have his feet in the stocks, and undergo various troubles. As *David* grew nearer the Kingdom, so did his troubles increase, and so he grew fitter for a Crown by his crosses: His Soul was as a weaned child, (*Psa.* 131. 2.) By troubles he was so humbled, as

as to be in less danger of being proud made worse by his honours. He may more safely enjoy the pleasures of Court without danger of surfeiting his ruine. When God intended to take *Jobs* estate, he stript him of all he had, so that he who in the morning was the richest man in the East, was at night poor to a proverb. As many times after great manifestations of his love the Lord humbles his people by great desertions and sore temptations in the Spirits, so in his providences. *Lazarus* observed, that before God honoured him to do any great piece of service for his name, he would exercise him with some sore affliction or humbling dispersion. There is a time wherein God will make the place of his feet glorious or glorify the house of his glory, even in this world; (*Isa.* 60. 7, 13.) But before this comes to pass, there may be such a time of trouble as never was, and the nearer the glory comes, the greater may be the trouble; as the nearer a man in travel is to deliverance, the stronger and more painful her travail may be, and it is darkest a little before the day breaks. When God intends to give his people a Joyful harvest, they

first expect a wet seed-time. *They that sow in tears, shall reap in Joy; They that go forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall return again rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them, (Psal. 126. 5. 6.)*

5. When God intends to make a compleat and full destruction of his and his Churches Enemies. Hence it was that *Israel* was in such great trouble, because God intended to get himself glory upon *Pharaoh* and upon the *Egyptians* in their utter overthrow. This may inhanse and raise the troubles of Gospel-churches in these last days of the world, because God hath a great design to execute the vengeance written against Antichrist, and to save his people from his Iron yoke. There shall be such a time of trouble as never was, saith *Daniel*, (*Chap. 12. 1.*) and then shall Gods people be delivered, and consequently their enemies ruined, for these mostly go together: As when *Mordecai* and the Jews had a great deliverance from troubles, *Haman* and his Complices had a dreadful overthrow. These like the buckets in a Well, the one coming up, the other goes down. If the wicked rise, the righteous mourn, but when those perish, these rejoyce. These are the seasons of the Churches troubles.

Qu. 2.

Qu 2. But you will say, *What are the reasons of their troubles?* To this I answer.

An 1. To take away their dross and purge away there sin. By this the iniquity of Jacob be purged, namely, by troubles and afflictions, (*Esa. 17. 9.*) *this is all the fruit to take away his sin.* The refining Pot is for Silver, and the Furnace for Gold, (*Prov. 17. 3.*) God put his Gold in the Furnace of affliction to take away dross, and make it more pure and refined. Flesh and blood will shrink at this, but grace will close with it, for it is the blessed design of love God hath in this, to bring them forth vessels of honour meet for his use, and ready for every good work.

2. To prevent their sinning, and their ruine. As God is pleased to prevent the infection of the air by thunder and lightning, which do much clarify the air, and to keep the Sea from putrifying by the winds, and the constant motion of the Waves, so he preserves his people from much hurt and danger by their troubles. He sees how apt prosperity is to infect them, and they to surfeit upon creature fulness; he sees an empty cup is better for them than a full; better to go

From a table hungry, than a glutton, and
thirsty, than drunk. When God gave
Israel what of outward things they desired,
it was their ruine, by reason of their sin,
(*Psal* 106. 15.)

3. To discover what is in them, both
of sin and grace. They neither know the
one nor the other, till tried by troubles,
and then they often find more sin, and less
grace than they made account of. When
the Waters are roiled, the Mud rises
which was at the bottom, not seen before.
O says a Christian, when stirred by trou-
bles, and passions rise, I did not imagine
there had been so much impatience and
discontent, so much pride, unbelief and
forwardness, and worldliness, as now I find
in my heart; I thought faith, and patience,
and other graces, had been more strong
than they are; alas, how weak are they
if any at all? I thought I could have wrest-
led with any trouble, and not have had
an impatient rising against God's provi-
dence, but now I see I am mistaken in my
self. Thus *Peter* thought he should have
lied, rather than denied his Master; but
when trial came, he found how much he
was deceived in himself. It is easie for
to talk of War in a time of Peace, but
Souldiers valour is known in a Bat-
tel.

tel. Troubles discover whether men adhere to God, his truth, and ways, swim down with the stream, and turn with every wind. For men then to stand the ground is something, but how often is the timorous weakness of many great Professors then discovered? We say commonly we cannot know a man thoroughly, till we have summer'd and winter'd him; so it is here; God brings a Summer of prosperity that discovers the weakness of many; but then comes a Winter of adversity, and discovers others: He that well bears both is a strong Christian indeed. When there is a great deal of Rain, we see what waters were in the ground that were not discovered before. Little do good men think or believe the corruptions that are in them, till by a day of trouble they find themselves. When *Absalom* was taken away by death, then was *David's* passion and inordinate affection to him made known, beyond what one would have thought to be in him. You may observe in some Professors a very loving courteous carriage while they are pleased, but if you cross and vex them a little, how violent and outrageous are they in their angry passions? Like the troubled Sea, casting out mire and dirt, raging waves of

sea, foaming out their own shame. O the unbecoming words and actions that will come from them! Hence when God would discover men, he brings upon them a day of trouble.

4. To make them useful to others. Hereby he furnishes them with experiences of his power, love and goodness, that they may be able experimentally to encourage and comfort others with what they themselves have found in a day of trouble. Hereby they are taught to sympathize with others that lie under inward troubles, sense of guilt, apprehensions of wrath, the fiery Darts of Satans temptations, long and sore desertions, combates with strong corruptions: They that never felt these troubles, cannot pity and compassionate others that are under them. He that hath endured the misery of those acute diseases, the Stone or Gout, he can best tell how to pity those that are under them. Christ himself submitted to suffer many temptations, that he might be able from his own experience to succour them that are tempted, (*Heb. 2. ult.*) So experienced Christians are the best and most able comforters of others in a day of trouble; none so able to advise and help them in trouble as these are; they can give

give experimental counsel and comfort, and this is one great end why they have been exercised with such troubles, that they may impart and communicate their experiences to others. And blessed be they who are thus found to improve their troubles.

Use 1. Of Information; in a word; God brings a day of trouble upon his people, Then let others know that he hath worse things in reserve for them. This is expressed in the verses before the Text, and after it; especially the 2d and 8th verses. The Lord revengeth, and is furious, the Lord will take vengeance on his Enemies, and he reserveth wrath for his Adversaries. Those that seek to thrust him beside his Throne, that oppose his Worship, contemn his Word, persecute his People, and say, we will not have this man to reign over us; bring his mine Enemies, will he say one day, and slay them before me, (*Luke 19. 27*). Such as return by true and lively repentance, shall not find him thus furious, but gracious. As for others, he hath wrath store, treasures of wrath against them: Their preservation for a time, is but a reservation of that wrath to come. If God use them

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Pruning-knife for his own Trees if they grow out of order, what shall be done to a Bramble, to a Thistle? O where shall the sinner and the ungodly appear? What shall be the end of them that obey not the Gospel, as the Apostle speaks, (1 Pet. 4. 17, 18.)

Use 2. Of exhortation, in two or three things. (1.) Let not Gods people censure themselves, nor others judge unrighteously of them, because of the troubles and adversities they meet with. To say they are none of Gods people, but wicked, and hypocrites. This is to write a false Commentary upon Gods people and his dealings with them; for in all ages they have been great sufferers. When some supposed the *Galileans*, whose blood Pilate mingled with their Sacrifices, and those on whom the Tower of *Siloam* fell and slew them, to be sinners above all those in *Galilee* and in *Jerusalem*, because they suffered such things, Christ tells them, No, it was nothing so, (Luke 13. the five first verses.) but except they repented, they should all likewise perish. When *Jobs* three friends had branded him for a wicked Hypocrite, because of his great and grievous troubles, *Job* would hold fast his righteousness, and not let his

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integrity

integrity go, (Job 27.4, 5.) He can
 appeal to God himself and say, Job 10.
 Thou knowest that I am not wicked.
 And God determines the business on
 his side against his Friends, and was
 angry with them for their ungrounded
 and rash Censures of him. Therefore
 none Judge hardly of themselves or
 others, but wait the issue. (2.)
 Gods people expect and prepare for
 a day of trouble. Let not a careless
 frame of Spirit possess them, for it is
 only because man is born to trouble
 that the sparks fly upward, that they are
 subject to it, but also because God hath
 in a special manner designed them to a
 suffering lot. Provide therefore for a
 day. Deny your selves and be ready
 to take up the Cross and that daily, (1
 Cor. 9. 23.) Who knows, whether a
 Calamity may not gather upon us that shall descend
 in a shower of Blood? Now then
 lay up in store a good foundation
 against the time to come. A stock of grace
 a stock of experiences, a stock of prayer
 will do well in such a day. (3.) Let
 people carry it well in and under any
 of trouble that befalls them in the
 Valley of the Shadow of Death.
 That is, Humbly: *Humble your selves*
under the mighty hand of God, (1 Pet. 5. 6.)
 Thankfully; for when it goes ill, it

have been much worse. *It is of the Lords mercies we are not consumed,* said the Church in a day of great trouble then upon her, (*Lam. 3. 22, Why should a living man complain?* Alive and complain, out of Hell and complain, this ought not so to be; but in the greatest trouble here, to be thankful we are cast into the bottomless Pit of Ruine, as our sins deserve. Patiently; let patience have its perfect work in us; when we can possess nothing here, if by faith we can possess God and in patience possess our own Souls, then when we are as having nothing, we shall still possess all things. Happy are we if troubles shall thus discover graces. Then will God be glorified thereby, and these are his great ends in exercising us with trouble. Spices smell not much till they are beaten; but then are very fragrant. If when God puts us into the *Mortar*, and beats us with the Pestel of afflictions, our Spikenard send out its favour, it is a blessed fruit and effect of trouble. And to say no more, let us carry it prayerfully in the time of our adversity. This hath been the practise of good men; Lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left, was the Message of *Hezekiah* to *Isaiah*, (*Chap. 37. 4.*) And this was his own practise, he went up to the house of

the Lord, Spread *Rabshakehs* reviling
 Blaspheinous Letter before him and pray-
 ed. *I called upon the Lord in my trouble,*
David, Psal. 116. 3, 4. This is it God
 commanded and hath also promised
 liverance to his people upon it, (*Psal.*
50. 15.) *Call upon me in the day of trouble*
I will deliver thee. As *David* said of *Goliath's*
Sword, so let me say of prayer, there
 is no means like it. Some in their trou-
 bles murmur against God, quarrel with
 second causes, laying the cause here
 there, and in stead of praying fall a cursing
 and swearing. It is common and easy
 to do thus, but who falls down before God
 and faith, Lord, it is for my pride,
 worldliness, my unprofitableness, that
 troubles come; O pardon and heal
 for thy names sake. O then let us be much
 with God in Prayer in all our own
 the Churches troubles; Only let there
 be fervent prayers. *The effectual fervent*
prayer of a righteous man availeth much
(James. 5. 16.) Much more the unanimous
 prayers of his Churches will prevail
 especially, if mixed with faith and
 joyn Reformation of heart and life to
 supplication. *If my people pray*
seek my face, and turn from their evil ways
then will I hear in heaven and forgive their
iniquities

iniquity, and heal the land, (2 Chron. 7. 14.)
 But if I regard iniquity in my heart, saies
 David, the Lord will not hear my prayer.
 How shall we think our requests can pre-
 vail, when our practises contradict our
 prayers? We pray against pride, divisi-
 ons, worldlyness, unfruitfulness, and yet
 continue in these sins. We lament our
 neglect of duty, in our families and clo-
 sets, our breach of Gods holy day, our
 deadness and loss of our first love and
 life, and yet go on in these things, our
 supplications without reformation are
 but a provocation, as the howling of Dogs
 in Gods ears, as he saith of *Israel* of Old.
They howled upon their Beds, (Hos. 7. 14.)
 and were no more regarded by God, than
 a Dog that howleth is by men. Had
 there been reforming answerable to our
 praying, we might have had the mercies
 prayed for before this. Let us then pray
 and turn from our evil waies, and God
 will turn his promises into performances,
 and our prayers into praises, our *Hosanna's*
 into *Hallelujahs*. And O that we could
 yet stir up our selves to take hold on God
 by faith and prayers. *Preces & lacrymæ,*
 Prayers and Tears are the Churches best
 weapons in a day of trouble. The Spirit of
 prayer failes, O that he who hath the re-

fidue of the Spirit, would once again
 out the Spirit of grace & supplication
 his people; So in every day of *Jacob*
 trouble, when he is brought low, and
 say, *By whom shall Jacob arise?* We
 find such wrestling with God by prayer
 will engage *Jacob's* God to command
 liverances for *Jacob* in due time. And
 nothing, that arises in our hearts to
 us from this duty, or deaden us in it,
 der us. Let none say, our troubles are
 extream that we are overwhelmed
 them. So it was with the *Psalms*
 (*Psal. 142. 3.*) His Spirit was
 whelmed in him, yet he prayed. That
 God lamed *Jacob* as if he had been
 Enemy, yet he wept and made supp
 tion. *Out of the Belly of Hell cryed I,*
Jonah. Let none say, our sins are so
 and we upon that account so vile and
 worthy, that we dare not pray, for
 heareth not sinners, (*John 19. 31.*)
 let such consider *David*, (*Psal. 40.*
13.) *My sins are more than the hairs*
my head, Yet he prays, *Be pleased, O Lord*
to deliver me, O Lord, make hast to be
 Let there be a real mourning for sin,
 turning from sin, and thy sins shall
 hinder thy prayers. That unbelief
 hinders thee from praying is worse

all thy other sins, as appears, (*John 16.*
9.) *He shall reprove the World of sin, because*
they believe not on me, saies Christ. Let
 none say, I would but I am unable, I
 want the Spirit of prayer; but know,
 there may be effectual and acceptable
 prayer when yet thou feelest nothing
 but a great indisposedness to prayer.
 When the Psalmist complaines he was so
 troubled that he could not speak, yet then
 he prayed, (*Psal. 77. 1. 3. 4. verse*) *I cried*
unto God with my voice, and he gave ear to
me. When *Hezekiah* could but chatter
 like a Crane, and mourn like a Dove, as
 he complains, *Isa. 38. 14. 5.* Yet even
 when the Spirit of prayer wrought effectually
 in him, as is clear by what God
 speaks. *I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy*
Tears. Neither let any say, it is to no purpose
 for them to pray, for many do well
 enough that never pray. But this is not
 true. For all such have, is but temporal
 good things, and they cannot have them
 as blessings with the love and favour of
 God, but in anger, as a curse, and to their
 hurt. *The prosperity of fools shall destroy*
them, (*Prov. 1. 32.*) But to them that
 pray, be it much or little they have, it is
 in love and sanctified by the word and
 prayer. Let none say, it is in vain for

them to pray, because God knows perfectly what our wants and troubles are before we pray, and hath determined what to do for us, and he is of one mind and who can turn him, prayer it self cannot alter his purpose. And he is of so gracious a nature that he is ready to give what he sees good for us, though we pray not for it. Now though all this be true yet to neglect prayer on these accounts is most weak and unsound. For, though God knows our wants, yet he hath commanded us in every thing by prayer and supplication, that we make known our requests to him, (*Philip. 4. 6.*) And whatsoever birth his decree and counsel Travels with in a way of mercy to us, he hath appointed prayer to be the midwife to hand it to us, (*Ezek. 36, 37.*) There are many gracious promises of good to Gods Church and people, *I will yet be enquired of, saith God, by the house of Israel to do it for them.* Yea, it is a manifest token of his goodness, that he will be sought unto for the good he purposeth and promiseth to bestow upon us. For it is because he loves to hear the work of his own Spirit in us, Let me here thy voice (*Cant. 2. 14.*) For sweet is thy voice; Thy prayer

praying voice, even as you that are Parents love to here your little ones speak though but lisping, much more doth God to hear his Children. And let none say, our prayers have been fruitless time after time, for it is no argument God neglects them, because they obtain not presently; for what if he sees it is better for us to be without a mercy than to have it? Is it not our interest to subscribe to his wisdom, and submit to his will therein? What if it be not for his glory we have it as yet, cannot we wait his time? *Martha* and *Mary* sent to Christ, (*John 11.*) to come quickly, for *Lazarus* whom he loved was sick. Yet Christ deferred coming till he had been dead some daies, & no hope in an ordinary way for his living again, till the Resurrection; This was done that God might be glorified in his being raised to life by a miracle. And what if God will answer our prayers in some better way than in giving us the thing prayed for? Ought we not to rest satisfied in his wise dispose for us? Are we fitter to carve for our selves than he is? Surely it is best for us to acquiesce in his gracious choice of our inheritance for us. *Abraham* prayed for *Ishmaels* conversion. O that *Ishmael* may be before thee; God answered him in
Isaac

Isaac which was better. *David* prayed for the life of his sick Child, God denied him in that, but answered him in *Solomon* a better mercy. *Paul* prayed for the removal of that sorely afflictive temptation which he knew not how to bear. God answered him with a promise of supporting grace which was better. So that if we could observe the waies of God towards us in answering prayer we should have no cause to restrain prayers upon a temptation that they are fruitless, but should see our labour is not in vain in the Lord. These things considered, nothing should take us off from or deaden our hearts in, prayer to God in the day of trouble, but we should be encouraged to continue instant in the duty, alwaies to pray and not to faint (*Luke 18. 1.*) But some will say, what shall we do to bear up till deliverance from trouble come? The 3. Doctrine tells us that, which may comfortably support us in praying and waiting for it, viz.

Doct 3. *That the Lord is a strong hold in the day of trouble.* So in the Text expressly. And thus God is set forth in other Scriptures. (*Isa. 26. 4.*) He is called the Rock of ages; a refuge to

that trust in him through all Generations. Hence it is said, (*Prov. 18. 10.*) *The name of the Lord is a strong Tower.* It is a Metaphorical speech; look what a strong Tower is in case of danger, such is the name of God in a day of trouble; the one sanctuary to run into for security. *The Lord is my Rock and my fortress, my strength, and my high Tower, saith David, (Psal. 18. 2.)* A strong fort or fortification. Hezekiah, who in his days of trouble had this very word in the text given him for his relief, found him so, notwithstanding Rabshakeh blasphemed in telling him, the God in whom he trusted would deceive him.

Qu. 1. And if you ask, *Wherein it appears, that God is a strong hold in the day of trouble;*

Ans. I answer; In that he is, and hath all that belongs to a strong hold: viz. Strength, provision, ammunition, advantage against Enemies, and the like. God hath strength, A paper-house will not make a good strong hold, or houses made of reed or rotten Timber; But God is my strength and power, saith David, (*2 Sam. 22. 32*) *In him his everlasting strength.* God hath provision: If this be wanting to them in strong holds, their enemies

enemies may starve them. But know what God is to his people, a Father, a Shepherd; These will provide for their children, for their flocks, God much more for his. So *Abraham* believed, My Son, God will provide, and so he found it, (*Gen. 22. 7. 8.*) God has also ammunition; In a strong hold there are great peices of Ordnance, which are for offence and defence. So in God there are glorious Attributes, he has made also gracious promises to his people, and terrible threatnings against his enemies; Faith and prayer give fire to these to discharge them, and then dreadful execution is done upon Gods and peoples Enemies. He makes his arrows sharp in the hearts of his Enemies, his right hand doth terrible things whereby they fall under him, (*Psal. 45. 4. 5.*) I might also shew, what great advantage he hath against Enemies to repulse and do them hurt; But I onely add that as a strong hold is not known only to them that are in it; So none know what strength, provision, or power are in God, but those that are in him. But some will say.

Qu. 2. Why or whence is it, that the Lord is a strong hold in the day of trouble?

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Ans. This he is, and hath undertaken to be for them, and to them, partly that he might make them every way happy. *Happy are the people, whose God is the Lord, that have the God of Jacob for their help, whose hope is in the Lord their God. (Psal. 144. 15. and Psal. 146. 5.)* Partly that his service might not seem unreasonable. Sometimes God calls his to very hard and difficult services. Now it is thought unreasonable, that a Master should set his servants about a work he will not defend them and bear them out in. God never doth so, he alwayes secures and protects those he imployes in doing or in suffering-work. His grace is sufficient to bear their charges, and his Kingdom is enough to reward their faithfulness in his service. Partly, because else in their fears and temptations they would be ready to run to other refuges and strong holds for their security. And partly to vex their Enemies. It is a great vexation to them, to see and observe God to be his peoples strong hold. How was *Saul* troubled and vexed to see that God was *David's* strong hold? *David* is said to dwell in strong holds, (1 *Sam.* 23. 29.) Sometimes he fled to one and sometimes to another, yet *David* acknowledgeth God to

to be his rock, refuge and high Tower and *Saul* was convinced in his own conscience, that God was with *David*. *David* with God, hid and secured in the secrets of his present, and this was matter of vexation to him, as it is to many others of his Spirit.

Use 1. This shews the great mistake of the Sons of men, and their sin. They mistake in thinking Gods people shelterless, and destitute of relief and safety, whereas they have a strong hold even God himself; They sin in persecuting them, for they persecute God and Christ, their strong hold; *Saul*, *Saul* *Why persecutest thou me;* (*Act. 9.*) They, that let fly their Arrows against those in a strong hold, shoot at the strong hold in which they are. So here, when the King of *Assyria* let fly his blasphemies against *Hezekiah*, by his servant *Rabshakeh*, God saith, *Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed?* (*Isa. 37. 23. 24.*) *and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, &c. even against the holy one of Israel:* By thy servant hast thou reproached the Lord. They sin and are greatly also, in betaking themselves to other strong holds, (*Nahum. 3. 14.*) *Justify thy strong holds.* The Prophet saith

to deride their care and cost in their fortifications. Some make strong Castles, others make riches their strong hold. The rich mans wealth is a strong City and a high wall in his own conceit: whereas in a time of common calamity, riches are more dangerous than poverty. The rich were carried away to *Babylon* into Captivity, when the poor were left to till the Land. (*Jer. 29. 10.*) Its spoken of that desolation by *Nebuchadnezzar*. 'Tis said, that in the Massacre at *Paris* diverse rich Papists were murdered for their estates as well as Protestants. Others make their Church-priviledges a strong hold, crying as of old, *The Temple of the Lord, The Temple of the Lord*, (*Jer. 7. 4.*) But these were lying words. There is no Sanctuary, no not in the Sanctuary; whilest men are in their sins. O that we could be affected and afflicted with & for the mistakes of men in this matter of so great concernment; and the rather, because of the danger there is in mens resting in them, they make lies their refuge, and the storm will sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters of Gods wrath overflow these hiding places.

Use 2. Of Exhortation. Let us all
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be perswaded in this day of trouble take the right course to secure selves. Turn to your strong hold, the Prophet, (*Zechar. 9. 12.*) That is God. *Satis presidii in uno deo.* There is security enough in one God, though we want other strong holds. O the trouble and perplexity they will be in when grievous calamities and death come that are not gotten into this strong hold. All hearts will melt, all hands and knees will be weak and feeble, and all faces will gather paleness because of the fierceness of God against them that are forgetful not to have secur'd themselves in the Sanctuary of safety. Therefore let us run and flee from the avenger of blood, that will pursue us, into this City of refuge, where we shall be hid in the day of the Lords anger. This is done by faith and prayer, upon these two we may run into this strong hold, and be set aloft from the fear of danger. By faith, we get into the hold of Gods Name and run into the several roomes thereof, his power, wisdom, providence, these are the chambers of preservation for our Souls in an evil time. And prayer is the other foot. By this, *Hezekiah*, in that day of trouble now upon him,

get into this strong hold, (*Iſa.* 37.) When God gives men the Spirit of prayer, he gives them the Key of this strong hold by which they may open the Gates and Doors thereof, enter in and be ſafe. Onely let it be fervent and faithful prayer. By this ſtrength we may have power with God as *Jacob* had and ſecure our Souls in the worſt days that can paſs over us in this world. So believe, and ſo pray that we may prevail, ſo run that we may obtain.

USE. 3. Let Gods people, who are by faith gotten into this ſtrong hold, know both their dignity and their duty. (1.) Their dignity and comfort. They are very precious in the Lords eſteem. Men do not uſe to ſecure their Lumber, but their Jewels and Treafure in a time of trouble and danger. Such a value hath God for his peculiar people, who are his Jewels, his peculiar Treafure, (*Mal.* 3. 17. *Pſal.* 135. 4.) He hid *Noah* in the Ark and *Lot* in *Zoar* before thoſe dreadful deſolations upon the old world by a deluge of waters, and upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah* by a ſhowre of fire. But to ſhew how ſtrong conſolation to believers; this affords, let us conſider what manner of ſtrong hold the Lord is, He is an in-

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vincible strong hold, he cannot be overcome by enemies. If a strong hold be taken by the enemy, it must be either by surprize, or by treachery, or by undermining, or by violent assault, or by starving. But none of these can befall God. He cannot be surprized, for he foresees all things, those most contingents and to us accidental. He cannot be overcome by treachery, for he knows the secrets of mens hearts, and makes their counsels and devices of no effect. He cannot be undermined, for he is infinitely above all. He cannot be overcome by violent assault, for strong is his hand and mighty is his right hand. Nor by starving, for he is self-sufficient. O the honour and comfort of those who have a dwelling in this strong hold. Be farther; This excels all other strong holds, in that it can deliver believers from all their fears, as *David* found (*Psal.* 34. 4.) it never fails in a day of trouble, as others may, and do. *God faileth me never*, saith *David*. Yea, it delivers when fallen into the Enemies hands as *Joseph* out of prison, *Jeremy* out of the dungeon, *Peter* from the expectation of the Jews. It is near to us at all times (*Psal.* 46. 1.) *God is our refuge, a very*

sent help in the time of trouble. Other strong holds may be safe, but are a far off it may be, when danger is nigh. Other strong holds last not, but God is the Saints dwelling place to all generations, (*Psal.* 90. 1.) (2.) Their duty. To keep themselves within this their strong hold. A man gotten into a City of refuge was safe if he kept close in it, (*Numb.* 35. 26. 27. 28.) otherwise in danger to be destroyed by them that pursued him. O wander not from your strong hold, go not out from God, but know it is your best interest in a day of trouble to keep close to him. It was a very evil day when the Psalmist wrote the 73. Psalm. The righteous were afflicted, and the ungodly prospered in the world; He began to conclude, it was in vain to be godly, and was dangerously tempted to forsake God and his ways; But at length he recollected himself, saw and lamented his own folly and Ignorance, renews the lively actings of his Faith, and concludes, it was best for him to draw nigh to God. O let all Gods people conclude and act thus for themselves; Keep yourselves within your strong hold in all the perils and dangers you see or foresee, so you may be free from inordinate fear in evil days, and

be able to encourage your selves in the Lord your God, as *David* did, and to have your hearts fixed in the most shaking times, trusting in him, and consider for your comfort, what is added in the Text, That he knoweth them that trust in him.

Doct. 4. *That the Lord knoweth them that trust in him in a day of trouble,* So the text speaks. What is said of another grace, (1 Cor. 8. 3.) is true of this here. If any love God, the same is known of him. So if any man trust in God, the same is known of him. God knows all men, but if any love and trust in him, them he knows in a special manner. Here I shall very briefly shew (1.) What it is to trust in God. (2.) In what he sense he knows such. (3.) Why he will do it?

Qu. 1. *What is it to trust in God in a day of trouble?*

Ans. The word signifies to betake ones self to God. So in the Prophet *Isaiah*, (Chap 14. ult.) the poor of his people shalt trust in it. *Chasah*, Confugit, That flees to him. It is accommodated to a double Metaphor, or similitude. (1.) As chickens betake themselves to the wings of the Hen. God is thus spoken of, (Dent. 32. 11. Matth. 23. 37.)

As an Eagle spreadeth abroad her Wings, taketh her young, beareth them on her Wings, so the Lord alone did lead him, speaking of *Jacob*. *How often would I have gathered you*, saies Christ to the Jews, *as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings?* And *Boaz*, speaking to *Ruth*, (*chap. 2. 12.*) saith, *a full reward be gi-
gintbee of the Lord God of Israel, under
whose Wings thou art come to trust.* (2.)

As men betake themselves to a Rock God is thereunto resembled, (*Deut. 32. 4.* He is a Rock, saith *Moses*, speaking of God. Now to follow these resemblances, when we betake our selves to God for shelter and for refreshment in the sense of miseries and necessities, then we are said to trust in him. Wings do both shelter and refresh in a Scorching time or time of danger. Thus doth a Rock also. Thus God hath Wings and is a Rock in these cases, to give shelter and to cherish in all troubles outward and spiritual. And thus hath the Scripture set him forth, & good men found him in all their straits and needs. See *Dauids* experience of him and carriage towards him, (*Psal. 17. 7. 8. Psal. 18. 2.*) *O thou that savest them that trust in thee, hide me under the Shadow of thy Wings.* In the Shadow of thy Wings

will I make my refuge, untill these Calamities be overpast, (Psal. 57. 1.) The Lord is my Rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my strength in whom I will trust, (Psal. 36. 7. 8. The Children of men shall put their trust under the Shadow of thy Wings they shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, &c. The Rock gave supply to Israel in the thirsty Wilderness, (Deut. 8. 15.) And that Rock was Christ saith Paul, (1 Cor. 10. 4.) So then, when in the sense of Soul miseries, as of guilt or temptations, we betake our selves to God in Christ, flee for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us, and to that grace that is sufficient for us; When in outward dangers we run into the name of the Lord as our strong hold, then we are said to trust in him. That's the first.

Qu. In what sense is it here said, he knoweth them that trust in him?

Ans. His knowing them is his care of them, his love to them, and his appearing to act suitably for them in a day of trouble. Men will neglect and pass by their Old acquaintance and not know them so as to take care of them, delight in them, or to act good for them. So will not God, he will not pass them by, as if he had

had no respect from them, but he careth for them, (*1 Pet. 5. 7.*) When others are careless of them, (*John 10. 27.*) *My sheep, saith Christ, hear my voice, and I know them*; That is, I am careful of them that they wander not, or if they do go astray, to seek them and bring them back that they do not perish, (*Psal. 1. 6.*) *The Lord knoweth the way of the righteous.* So he doth he way of the wicked. But it is meant of a knowledge with affection and approbation. So he knoweth them that trust in him, therefore he hath in the Scripture pronounced them blessed, (*Psal. 34. 8.*) *Blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.* Yea this implies, that he will own and acknowledge them, he will declare and manifest unto others that they are his people, (*Amos 3. 2.*) *You only have I known of all the families of the Earth, &c.* Not as his creatures only, as he knows all the beasts of the field, (*Psal. 50. 11.*) but as his Children. So he owned *Joseph, Job, and Jeremiah* in all their troubles. *Now know I that thou fearest me,* saies God of *Abraham*; (*Gen. 22. 12.*) That is, I have by trying thee in thy *Isaac*, made it known to all the World that shall hear of thee, what manner of man *Abraham* is, God glories in his

Servants that trust in him in daies of Trial and Trouble, yea, he knoweth them so as to keep them and deliver them, (2 Pet. 2. 9.) The Lord knows how to deliver the Godly out of Temptation. When they know not what to do, nor how deliverance should come, yet God knows how to save and deliver.

Qu. 3. Ye will say. *Why will God thus know believers in a day of trouble?*

Ans. Partly, because faith is his own gift and work in them. *To you it is given to believe,* (Phil. 1. 29.) *Faith is the gift of God,* (Eph. 2. 8.) And he will know and own his own work and Crown it too. Partly, because they do what God requires (Psal. 62. 8.) *Turst ye in the Lord at all times, ye people.* And partly, because they know and own God in such a day. A man that knows not God, cannot rightly believe in him, *but they that know thy name will put their trust in thee,* saith David, (Psal. 9. 10.) And by trusting in him in their troubles, they own him to be one worthy to be relied on in the greatest straits. Hence that resolution of Job, (Chap. 13. 15.) *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.* As he loves those that love him, so he knows those that shew and manifest

manifest to the world, that they know him and can own him in the face of Death it self. Now the use.

Use 1. Let us then try our selves, are we those that trust in God in a trouble? Such will use no unlawful means to get out of trouble, as others will. Such dare not live in any known sin under the means of grace, as others do. Such bring forth the fruits of faith looking after Christs righteousness for Justification, true holiness of heart and life; others content themselves with outward duties and priviledges, outward profession and a form of godliness. Well, let us remember, God knows them that trust not in him as well as those that do. He can distinguish between the true and counterfeit believer. And as he knows them that believe truly in their troubles, so he knows the unbelievers in the time of their fears and straits when they come upon them. *He will laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh,* (Prov. 7. 26, 27, 28.) Nor will he so know them in Death and Judgment as to own and save them, but so as to discard and cast them off, with a *Depart from me, I know you not.* I know you to be workers of iniquity, to be unbelievers, but I love you

you not, I own you not, I reject you as unbelievers, depart from me, I never knew you. Men can bear these words from the Mouth of a Minister of the Gospel, but O how will they be comforted for ever when Christ himself shall utter them, as he will certainly do as you read from himself, (*Mat. 7. 23. Matth. 25. 12.*) O who would rest in an unbelieving state? Who would be satisfied without the grace of saving faith?

Use 2. Let all Gods poor and afflicted people continue to trust in the name of the Lord. Let this encourage you that it, he knows them that trust in him in a day of trouble, (*Psal. 31. 7.*) *He knoweth my Soul in adversity.* He knows your names and persons, (*2 Tim. 2. 19.*) *The Lord knoweth them that are his.* He knows their graces and good works. (*Rev. 2. 2.*) *I know thy works, faith Christ to the Church of Ephesus, and thy labour and thy patience.* He knows their thoughts and desires. Lord, saies David, *all my desire is before thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee.* He knows their frame, (*Psal. 103. 13, 14.*) What trouble they are able to bear, and will remember it so as not to over-burden them. He knows their

their corruptions, and temptations, and their enemies. He sees what sin they grapple with, and will not suffer it to have dominion over them, (*Rom. 6. 14.*) Christ prays that their Faith fail not in the time of temptation, (*Luke 22. 32.*) He knows the power and policy of all their enemies, so as to break their arm, and crush their head. He knows the walk and conversation of his people. *Thou knowest, saith Job, the way that I take,* (*Job. 23. 10.*) What great and excellent comforts are these for all believers! O therefore trust in the Lord for ever, though daies of trouble be many and great, for if the times be evil, and men be evil, yet the Lord is good, is a strong hold in the day of Trouble, and he knoweth them that trust in him.

SERM.

S E R M O N V.

John 12. 35.

Walk while ye have the Light.

THese words are part of Christ's answer to a Question some of the Jews made touching himself. Though they had enjoyed the benefit of his Ministry and Miracles to convince them that he was the *Messiah*, and spake to them of his death and sufferings, yet they were so wilfully blind, as to shut their eyes against the light: Hence he makes a direct answer to their Question, namely *Who is this Son of Man?* In the verse before the Text, but secretly taxeth their ignorance & obstinacy against the means of salvation; intimating, that he, who a light shined among them, should shortly be taken from them, and if they did not improve this light whilst they had it, they should be left to their blindness and ignorance, to their own just ruin and destruction.

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There is no difficulty upon the terms of the Text, but to find what is meant by light? Which cannot be taken properly, for that noble and excellent quality which enlightens the earth, called the light of this World; (*John 11. 9.*) But Metaphorically, and so it is used variously in the Scripture; Sometimes for the word of God; *Thy word is a light to my feet, saith David, (Psal. 119. 105.)* Sometimes for Gospel-Ministers, *Ye are the light of the World, (Matth. 5. 14.)* But here it is to be taken for Christ himself. For it is that light which they are called to believe in, in the next verse to the Text. *While ye have light, believe in the light, that is, believe in me; as is evident, in that they are taxed for not believing on him, 37. verse. And (John 14. 1.) He requires men to believe in him; so that in the words two things are considerable.*

1. *Suppositio beneficij*; A benefit supposed: *Ye have the light.*

2. *Positio obsequij*. A duty imposed: *Walk while ye have the light.*

Accordingly there are two Propositions offer themselves to us from the words;

1. *That Christ is the light to the Soul.*
2. *That it is the duty of men to walk while they*

they have the light. Of these in order

Doct. 1. *That Christ is the light* to the Soul. So he preaches himself to be in the Text and other places. *I am come a Light into the World,* (John 12. 46.) (*while I am in the World, I am the light of the World* (John 9. 5.) Sometimes there is an article in the Greek which bears an Emphasis; in (John 1. 9.) and in the Text before us: *ὅς ὡς ἔχετε, Ye have that Light:* This is that Light; Shewing Christ to be the light. But to come to particulars?

1. He is *light essentialiter*, essentially. That *lux increata*; that divine and uncreated light: *God is light*, saith the apostle (John 1. 5.) He is said to be clothed with light as with a Garment (Psal. 104. 2.) To dwell in that light which no man can approach unto, (1 Tim. 6. 16.) *ὡς ἀπρόσβατον*, light inaccessible. Light in others is created and so is a quality, and therefore separable; The Angels by creation were full of light, called the morning Stars, (Job. 38. 7.) Though many of them by the fall are Angels in darkness. Magistrates when just and governing in the fear of God, are said to be as the light of the morning when the Sun riseth, as a morning without Clouds,

David saith, (2 Sam. 23. 3. 4.) Ministers
are said to be Stars in the hand of Christ,
(Rev. 2. 1.) And Christians are said to
shine as lights in the World, (Phil. 2. 15.)
Yet none of these are light essentially, as
Christ is.

2. He is light *primitive*, originally :
hence he is called a Sun, (Psal. 84. 11.)
Many understand it of Christ. To besure,
that of the Prophet *Malachi* is so taken,
(Mal. 4. 2.) Where he is called the Sun of
righteousness. The natural Sun is *fons*
lucis, the fountain of light : The Moon and
stars derive all from it, much more may
Christ be thus esteemed to be the Ori-
ginal light : *With thee*, saith the Psalmist,
is the fountain of life, yea and of light
also : For he is styled *the Father of lights*,
(James 1. 17.) Angels, Magistrates, Mi-
nisters, Christians, yea every man that
comes into the World have their light
from him, (John 1. 9.) Of his fulness all
receive, some a Natural, others a Spiri-
tual light, thus true believers only ; All
have but a borrowed light : All have
their light from the Lord, but believers
have light in the Lord, (Eph. 5. 8.) *Tan-*
quam in causa producente, as some interpret ;
the Lord giving them a sanctifying and
living light : To all the light of reason,
to

To many, the light of Scripture ; To some, the light of conviction ; To his own, the light of grace and sound conversion. Not the same measure of any kind of light to all, but various degrees as he pleaseth ; But still the original and primitive cause of all, that is Christ alone.

3. He is light *ratione veritatis* ; In respect of Truth, (*John 1. 9.*) *That was the true Light*, saith the Text : τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν a double Article to make it more significant : That light, That true light. That said of John Baptist, (*John. 5. 35.*) he was a burning and a shining light ; but he was not that light, that true Light, Christ, as he is the true vine, (*John. 15. 1.*) the true bread that came down from Heaven, (*John 6. 32.*) So he only is the true light, in opposition to false and deceitful lights. There are *ignes falsi* false and imaginary lights which men kindle up, that yet do but delude them. As such the Prophet speaks ; (*Isaiah 50. 11.*) *Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, and compass your selves about with sparks ; walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks of the fire ye have kindled ; This ye shall have of your hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow.* By light and fire here, some understand the

own natural righteousness, and by the sparks, the acts and works of righteousness, which may be struck out by flint and steel, especially when joyned with the word good education, and an enlightened conscience; These men content themselves with, and rest in all their days, without union with Christ the Spring of all, and so perish. Others rather will have it meant of outward comforts, which while men enjoy abundance of, they bless themselves as if therefore they were beloved of God, and in his special favour, living still in the neglect of Christ and his righteousness. Some will have both these taken in, yet all this is but *ignis culinaris*, kitchen fire, the Sons of the coal a light and fire of our own setting up and kindling, not the true light. And what will be the fruit and issue of all, but that instead of the comfort and security we expect by them, instead of lying down upon our Beds of rest and ease, we meet with nothing but trouble, sorrow and vexation? Many pretend to be new lights, but true lights they are not. In the Apostles days some seem'd Angels of light, would bring in a new way of life and salvation, (2 Cor. 11. 13.) The Mosaical Rites, and Justification in

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part

part at least by the works of the Law, but these hindered the progress of the Gospel then, and we have but too sad effects of such pretending to new light, and new truths. but are contrary to Christ in his Doctrine, which is the only truth that is according to godliness.

4. He is the light, *ratione intensioris*; In regard of eminency, and perfection. Hence he is said to be light, and in him is no darkness at all, (1 John 1. 5.) In the Angels that fell, there is darkness, and no good at all. And in them that yet stand, its evident that the light that is in them is not absolutely perfect; His Angels he chargeth with folly, (Job 4. 18.) With possible folly; but those that sinned are held in Chains of darkness. In the best men that are there is imperfection. There is smoke in our best elementary fire, but none in the Sun. The light of the saints hath much darkness in it, and therefore the Church is resembled to the Moon, (Cant. 6. 10.) Fair as the Moon. Now the Moon at the full hath dark Spots. But as Christ is a Lamb, so is he a light without the least spot or deficiency.

5. He is the light, *ratione durationis*; In regard of continuance. Even when
creature

creature light shall be swallowed up, as the light of the Stars is by the Sun, then shall he be light. Hence that promise, (*Isa. 60. 19.*) *The Sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the Moon give light to thee; But the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory,* (*Rev. 21. 23.*) Its said, *The City had no need of the Sun, nor of the Moon to Shine in it, for the glory of God did lighten, it and the Lamb is the light thereof.* We cannot think the meaning to be as if the people of God should at any time here have no need of these celestial Bodies to give them light, but that they shall have such a clear shining of the light of his truth, favour and gracious fellowship, that shall render these common and ordinary lights of little account: Yet some refer that in *Isaiab* wholly to the heavenly state, when these outward lights ceasing, God shall be all in all: And that in the Revelation many understand to be meant of the Church on Earth. That they shall have so much comfortable converse with Christ here, that they shall make light account of all worldly enjoyments: But will more fully be compleated in heaven, when these ordinary lights shall be useless, and God in Christ shall be an

everlasting light, a light that hath no shadow of change as these bodily lights often have, a light that Shines by night as well as by day; a constant perpetual light that never sets or is eclipsed, but shines to all eternity. Hence he is said, (*Heb. 13. 8.*) To be the *same yesterday, to day, and for ever.* Yesterday, viz. To them under the Law, To day, viz. To us under the Gospel, *and for ever*, viz. To them in heaven, and there without variation, or shadow of change. To open this yet further.

Qu. Ye will say, *in what sense or respect is Christ the light?*

Ans. As he is opposed to a threefold darkness, so he is a light in three respects.

1. There is a darkness of misery, (*Isa. 8. 22.*) *They shall look to the Earth, and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish, and they shall be driven to darkness.* It is spoken of the Idolatrous Israelites, who finding no help from heaven, turn their eyes downward, looking hither and thither for comfort, but instead thereof, meet with nothing but darkness, are driven to darkness; that is, to variety, extremity, and continuance of misery. Hell is called *outer darkness*, because of the sorrow, misery, and discomfort to them there.

there. In opposition to this is the *light of joy and gladness*. The Jews had light and gladness, joy and honour, (*Esth. 8. 16.*) *Light is sown for the Righteous, and Gladness for the upright in heart,* (*Psal. 97. 11.*) Light and gladness here are the same; the reason why light is put for gladness, is because light is pleasant, and disposeth a man to joy, whereas darkness inclines a man to sadness: *Light is sweet,* saith Solomon, (*Eccle. 11. 7.*) *And a pleasant thing it is to the eyes to behold the Sun.* Thus Christ is light, for he gives the truest ground of Joy, (*Isa. 9. 2.*) *The people that walked in darkness, have seen a great light; they that dwell in the Land of the Shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.* This prophecy is applyed to the coming of Christ, (*Mat. 4. 16.*) and then said to be in part fulfilled. The meaning is plain. The people of God, *Israel and Judah* walking in the darkness of misery and calamity, shall see that light at the coming of the *Messiah*, which will glad and rejoyce their hearts. Therefore we read that the news of his Incarnation is said to be tidings of great Joy, (*Luke 2. 10.*) *And when Christ was preached by Philip in Samaria there was great Joy in that City,* (*Acts 8. 5, 8.*) Hence it is called

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led the preaching of the acceptable year of the Lord, (Luke 4. 19.) Not as if Christ preached but one year, as some think, (for he preached more than one or two years,) but it is an allusion to the year of Jubile, which was a general release proclaimed by sound of Trumpet to them that would go free, which could not but be matter of Joy to many : So this is the happy time of Gods grace, wherein the welcom news of the Gospel is proclaimed, wherein men may be acceptable to Christ, if they come in unto him ; They shall be set free by the Son, and then they are free indeed, free from the guilt of sin, the curse of the Law, and so from the fear of condemnation. This is the good will of God in Christ to sinners, and tidings of great Joy to all that truly receive Christ as he is offered in the Gospel ; Thus Christ is light in opposition to the darkness of trouble and misery.

2. There is the darkness of sin and wickedness : *What communion hath light with darkness ?* (2 Cor. 6. 14.) Gracious persons with wicked Idolaters in Marriage, or other intimate fellowship : If we say we have fellowship with God, and walk in darkness, that is, in sin and ungodliness,

we lie, and the truth is not in us, (1 Joh. 1. 6.)
And we are exhorted to *put off the deeds of darkness, (Rom. 13. 12.)* And to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, *(Eph. 5. 11.)* Which works are set down in the third and fourth verses of the Chapter. *But fornication, and uncleanness, and covetousness, let it not be once named among you as becometh Saints.* In opposition to this is the light of holiness, and true conversion. Hence when men are said to be turned from Satan to God, it is set out by their being turned from darkness to light, *(Acts 16. 18.)* And by their being translated from the power of darkness, *(Col. 1. 13, 14.)* And the Church is said to be clothed with the Sun, *(Rev. 12. 1.)* Thus is Christ the light, *(1.)* For his whiteness, and this relates to the Righteousness of Justification. Light is white, *(Mat. 17. 2.)* When Christ was transfigured, his raiment was white as the light. Christ is light, he is clothed, and clothes his Saints with white Garments, *(Rev. 3. v. 4.)* They are said to walk with Christ in White, and to have washed their Robs, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, *(Rev. 7. 14.)* In this sense are believers all fair and no spot in them, *(Cant. 4. 7.)* Light is of so undefileable

a nature, that nothing can pollute it; It shines into the most nasty and filthy places, and contracts no defilement. And such are these garments of Justifying righteousness with which he investeth his Church and people. (2.) For direction. Light directs us how to walk and keep our way, and keeps from stumbling and falling into danger: *If any man walk in the day he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this World,* (John 11. 9.) *But if a man walk in the night he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.* This relates to the righteousness of sanctification, (Psal. 43. v. 3.) *O send out thy light and thy truth, let them lead me.* Light guides the traveller in his way. Men in the dark lose their way, and go they know not whither, as the Text we are upon speaks: Think they are going to heaven, when indeed it is to Hell that they are going; *The way of the wicked is as darkness,* saith Solomon, (Prov. 4. 19.) *They know not at what they stumble.* Those men stricken with blindness, (2 Kings 6.) thought they had been going to Dotham, but when their eyes were opened, behold, they were in the midst of Samaria, their enemies Country. Thus men think of going to paradise, because they are in the dark, and if the Lord be

be not gracious to open their eyes in time, they go into outer darkness. Now Christ is the light to lead the blind in the way they know not, and hath promised to do it, (*Isa. 42. 16.*) *I will bring the blind by a way they know not, and lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, &c.* This is he that leads Souls in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of Judgment, (*Prov. 8. 20.*) And the Psalmist speaks the same; (*Psal. 23. 3.*) *He leadeth in the paths of Righteousness for his names sake.* When *Israel* followed the Pillar in the Wilderness, they took no harm. When *Peter* kept neer the light, followed Christ close, he stumbled not, but leaving Christ, he dashed himself against a stone, and sadly bruised himself. Good *Josiah* walked in the night in that rash expedition against *Pharaoh-Necho*; He went up to the Battel not so much as asking counsel of God, and lost his life. Christ is the only light to guide our feet into the way of peace, as he leads in the way of holiness in which way-faring men, though fools, err not.

3- There is the darkness of Ignorance. The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not, (*John 1. 5.*) It is spoken

spoken of man in the State of nature. The first man was made full of light and knowledge, but by the fall is full of darkness and ignorance, (Eph. 4. 18.) *Alienated from the life of God through their understanding being darkened, and the ignorance that is in them.* Natural men may have a deep reach into the matters of this world, but there is dreadful darkness upon the face of their Souls in the things of God, and of his Spirit: Though the light of the works and word of God shines upon them, yet the darkness comprehendeth it not. *The natural man perceiveth not the things of God, they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned, (1 Cor. 2. 14.)* The natural light scattereth the darkness where it comes, if the light comes, darkness gives place to it, and flees away; but this spiritual darkness will resist and rebel against the light as some are charged, (Job 24. 13.) And men are said to love darkness more than light, (Job. 3. 19.) And that Apostle saith, (1 Job. 2. 8, 11.) *The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth; but he that hateth his Brother is in darkness, and walks in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because darkness hath blinded his eyes.* What profession of light so ever

Such a one may make, and whatever shines upon him outwardly, yet he is in darkness, and knoweth not his estate God-ward; he knoweth not whither he goeth to heaven or to Hell, nor what his end will be, whither Joy or misery. This was the vail drawn over the face of the Gentiles before the coming of Christ: Hence the Prophet (*Isa. 60. 1.*) Upon a Prospect of Christs appearance, cries out, *Arise shine, for thy light is come, the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.* Christ the true light, the glory of the Father, will ere long come and shew himself glorious in his Doctrine, miracles, and the work of Redemption for the salvation of his Church and people. Hence when he comes, he is said to give the knowledge of salvation unto his people, by the remission of their sins, (*Luke 1. 77.*) And the light of the knowledge of the glory of God is seen only in the face of Christ, (*2 Cor. 4. 6.*) More particularly; He sheweth two properties of light. (1.) As he makes things manifest. The Apostle saith, (*Eph. 5. 13.*) *All things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light, for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.* Thus doth Christ discover the glorious things of God; His blessed attributes, the freeness of his grace, the

the riches of his mercy, his infinite truth, power, wisdom, Justice, and goodness. He discovers the depth of *Satan*, the mysteries of iniquity by which he works, the windings and turnings of this old crooked Serpent, the wiles, devices, and methods of this subtil & deceitful adversary. *We are not ignorant of his devices*, saith *Paul*, (2 Cor. 2. v. 11.) Thanks be to Christ, the true light, for the knowledge of them. He also makes manifest the hidden Counsels of mens hearts. He shews what our natures are and what our conditions are, whether good or bad, pleasing to God or no. (2.) He enlightens the Soul to apprehend these things, for it is blind, (Isa. 42. 18.) *Look ye blind, that ye may see.* For though we have eyes, yet we are blind, and cannot see; *Who is blind but my Servant?* As the next words are. He it is only that takes away the covering and the vail that is spread over Nations and people. There is a vail upon the hearts of men Jews and Gentiles, which is done away by Christ alone, (2 Cor. 3. 14, 15.) He only opens the eyes of them that are born blind (John 9.) As we all are in a Spiritual sense, and in his light gives us to see light.

Use 1. Here we may see that a Christless estate is a dark estate. *Ye were some-*
times

times darkness, (*Eph.* 5. 8.) Not dark
only, but darkness in the abstract. At
what time was this? The Apostle tells
us, if we compare this with *Ephesians* 2. 12.
At that time ye were without Christ,
in your Gentile-state, in your natural and
unregenerate condition; O who can ex-
press how dreadfully unhappy and mise-
rable the estates of all such people are!
Such are unfit for work, for their callings
& employments. We read when the *Egyp-
tians* were under that plague of darkness,
(*Exod.* 10. 23.) No man stirred from
his place for three daies together. We
never stir a step heavenward while we a-
bide without Christ; we do not a stroke
of work, as I may say, for God or our
Souls, nor do we know how to order our
words, thoughts, or actions, by reason of
darkness. Besides, a Christless state renders
us full of fears, as darkness is that which
makes many fearful and afraid; Some are
afraid to be alone in the dark. Christless
Souls, if sensible of their condition, can-
not be fearless Souls. But few are truly
sensible of this, and therefore are people
so generally careless, and fearless, and secure
as they be. The *Egyptian* darkness was
felt, but so is not spiritual darkness, and
thence no more fears and complaints of
it.

it. But when any are awakened to purpose, and have any spiritual sense, then how full of fears are the hearts of such? Fears lest death surprize them, lest their hearts ruine them, lest *Satan* devoure them, lest the Justice of God overtake them. They rise up in fear, and lye down in fear, they go out and come in under many fears, they work out their Salvation with fear and trembling. Besides; In the dark men wander, and are apt to be misled into dangerous waies; So when no light of knowledge to direct, no light of holiness to guide the Soul, how sadly must it wander? And without Christ no beam of light can be obtained, for he is the light. O that the Lord would affects our hearts with the danger of resting in a natural estate, a Christless conditon! The blind man was sensible of his bodily blindness and darkness, but the Pharisees would not be convinced of their Spiritual blindness, (*John 9. ult.*) *Are we blind also?* said they to Christ. He answers them; *Ye say we see, therefore your sin remains.* Hence he saies a verse before; *For Judgment am I come into the World, that they that see not might see, and they that see might be made blind.* That is, that they that are sensible of their blindness might see; and they

they that are only conceited they see, might be Judicially blinded. How full of pride was their question. *Are we blind also?* Yet how often doth Christ come over with it in one chapter, viz. (*Matth. 23.*) To awaken them, (*14, 24, 26, v.*) Thou blind Pharisee. Ye blind guides. Thou fool and blind. Here was their dangerous mistake, to say they saw, though without Christ, who only could give them sight and light. Let us all awake out of our Spiritual sleep, and Christ shall give us light. Awake prophane Man or Woman; Awake ye civil Moral people; Awake ye foolish Virgins, ye hypocrites, and unsound professors of the Gospel, stand up from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.

Use 2. Of comfort to those who have Christ, a real well-grounded interest in him, a Spiritual and sound union with him. You cannot want light having him who is the essential, primitive, true eminent and durable light. Ye are light in the Lord, and the Lord in you is a light unto you. 'Tis true, you have the remains of darkness in you still, sin, and error, and ignorance, for ye are sanctified in part, only, and know but in part, yet
Christ

Christ wil scatter all those black mist
 that trouble you. You are sometimes in
 the darkness of desertion, and see
 light of comfort, like them, (*Acts* 27. 20.)
 Who were upon the stormy Sea, and
 without any appearance of sun or star
 for many days, so that hope of being
 saved was taken away; Yet, *to the right*
right there ariseth light in the darkness
 (*Psal.* 112. 4.) Your darkness shall in
 due time be turned into light: But
 Christs goings forth are prepared as the
 morning, (*Hos.* 6. 3.) Now the morn-
 ing goes forth gradually; small at first,
 but grows up to perfection. So
 Christ gives first some crevis of light
 the day of small things, but the promise
 is, (*Prov.* 4. 18.) *The path of the just shall*
be as the Shining light, that shineth more and
more unto the perfect day. And so, though
 it may be in regard of Gods providence
 cloudy and a dark day, as the Prophet
Ezekiel speaks, yet Christ will lighten
 us by his word and promises. Where
 there is darkness in his works of provi-
 dence, Christ will afford light enough
 to see our way and work, he will give
 the light of knowledge in the darkness
 of ignorance, the light of hope in the
 darkness of desertion, the light of his
 grac

grace in the darkness of corruption ;
the light of Joy in the darkness of affliction ; and the light of deliverance in the darkness of extream persecution. We rejoyce when we see the natural light ; How much more ought we to rejoyce and be thankful for Christ this excellent light ?

Object. Some will say, *This would cause us much to rejoyce, if we could find that Christ were a light to us in a saving way ; doth not Christ himself caution us, (Luke 11. 35.) to take heed, lest the light that is in us be darkened ? How then shall we know Christ is a saving light to us, that we may apply these comforts ?*

Ans. 1. The true light is that which comes from heaven. Christ is such a light, he comes from heaven, from thence he shines upon and into the very hearts and Souls of men. We read, (*Acts 9. 3.*) That as *Saul* journied and came neer *Damascus*, suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven. This was some beams of glory from the glorified body of the Lord Jesus, for it is said to be above the brightness of the Sun, (*Acts 26. 13.*) If still you say, may not a false
O light

light pretend to be from heaven? Are not such pretences frequently made by those who hold forth new lights? How shall we then certainly know the light which is indeed from heaven, from pretenders to it? There are three Characters of it, or three effects of this light which shined from heaven upon *Saul*, set down in the 4th, 5th, and 6th verses of this 9th Chap. of the *Acts*; which will be found upon others also in some measure upon whom Christ this true Light shines savingly. (1.) It is a humbling light. This was the first effect it had upon *Saul*, verse 4. He fell to the earth; not only prostrate in his body, but doubtless his heart was low, laid in the dust even at the foot of Christ. Hath the light we received had this blessed effect upon us, to humble us for the pride of our heart? Doth it puff us up, and make us proud, conceited of our selves, despisers of others: This light is the work of the Prince of darkness, transforming himself into an Angel of light. The light from heaven brought *Saul* into a posture of humility, who before thought scorn to be troubled; and will have the same effect upon our hearts. (2.) It made *Saul* in-

quisitive

quisitive after Christ, *verse 5.* *He said, Who art thou Lord?* By which question, he acknowledgeth his own ignorance, and mistake, and begs information and instruction in the knowledge of Christ. Such operation will the light that comes indeed from Heaven have upon us. It will make us full of enquiries after Christ. Such as these; *Who art thou Lord?* How shall I know thee? Where shall I find thee? How shall I come to be acquainted with thee, O thou blessed Lord Jesus? How may I get some experimental knowledge of thee in the vertues of thy death, in the power of thy resurrection, in the influences of thy grace and Spirit, in the comforts of thy love and covenant? (3.) It caused *Saul* to submit himself to Christ, his will to Christs commands, *verse 6.* He said, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* As if he had said, I have gone formerly to men to know what service they would command me, but now I bow myself to thy most holy pleasure, Lord, *What wilt thou have me to do?* Speak Lord, and give me what commands thou pleasest, and I am ready through thy grace to comply with them; Make and propound
O 2 thy

thy own terms, I will submit to them. A man may have great natural light, and acquired knowledge in Arts and Sciences, in Tongues and Languages, and these are so far from causing his heart to submit to Christs will, that he will be ready to stand upon his own Terms. But if it be from heaven, it will cause a man to strike sail to Christ absolutely and presently, as we see here in *Saul*. Are we able to say, *Speak Lord for thy Servants hear*. Write thy own terms, declare thy pleasure what thou wilt have us to do or suffer, our wills and interests are swallowed up in thine. We will no longer be our own, to do the wills of the flesh and of the mind, or to be captives to Satan at his will, but we would be melted into thy holy will, and improve our utmost strength and designs for thy service. This is a light darted into thy Soul from heaven, this is a sure evidence it is Christ that is thy saving light, when it thus makes thee humble before him, inquisitive after him, and submitting thyself unto him.

2. Christ the true saving light is warming and enlivening; Such is the Sun to
the

the earth; It heats and quickens the creatures. Such is the Lord Christ to the Church, to the hearts of those that are his indeed. The Lord God is a Sun, (*Psal.* 84. 11.) which several expound of Christ. It is he alone that heats our Chill Spirits. He quickens those dead in trespasses and sins, (*Eph.* 2. 1.) But now because there are false heats, some will yet enquire how we may know the heat and quickening we have to be from Christ? For answer briefly. (1.) If it be a heat from the Lord, it will warm us throughout, inwardly as well as outwardly. Artificial heat is only external; but this heats within and without, it warms every part as well as any one. *The fire within me burst out*, saith David, (*Psal.* 39. 3.) It made Paul truly zealous for God. It made the disciples hearts to burn within them, (*Luke* 24. 32.) The Ark was pitched within and without. This heat Christ gives will make us not only abstain from sin out of respect to men and our credit with them, but to abhor and hate every false way out of a deep respect to God. The Sun warms every part of the body; God and Christ can pierce deeper than the Sun. (2.) This

This true light warms intensely as well as throughly. I mean, it heats more and more unto perfection : It makes us fervent, boiling hot in Spirit, not like *Jehu*, zealous only in pretence, and growing colder as his own ends were attained, but still pressing more and more after the mark ; still more of God, more of Christ. The heart was never so much for sin and self, but now it is as intense upon God. (3.) If the light we have, and the heat and quickening from it be from Christ, then it is communicative. The Sun communicates his light and heat, his beams and lustre to others ; so it will be here. A man will not be all for himself. There is no Minister truly enlivened by the Lord, but he will say, O that all my people were savingly enlightned and quickned by Jesus Christ ; *Come, let us go up to the house of the Lord, and let us walk in the light of the Lord.* There is no Christian thus wrought upon but will be ready to say as the Woman of Samaria did, (*John 4. 29*) *Come see a man that told me all that ever I did.* Or as David, *Come, and I will tell you what the Lord hath done for my Soul.* Thus as the Sun brings the creatures it produceth
to

to their perfection, so doth Christ much more finish his good work he hath begun to its perfect growth and maturity. This is the light and heat of the Lord. (4.) If it be attractive and drawing, lifting up the affections, and drawing away the corruptions of the heart, it is from Christ. The light and heat of the Sun doth attract and elevate the vapours and fogs from the earth. So Christ the Sun of righteousness doth, (1.) Draw up the affections of Souls to himself. *When I am lifted up, saith Christ, I will draw all men unto me, (John 12. 32.) No man can come to me, except the father draw him, saies Christ, (John 6. 44.) Draw us, saith the Spouse, we will run after thee, (Cant. 1. 4.)* He will draw up our love, our joy and our desires unto him, our sorrow, our hatred and all our affections. We shall love as he loves, and grieve where he grieves, and hate what he hates, and joy in what he rejoiceth in. He carries away our hearts from whatever was the unlawful object of our love, and makes us willing in the day of his power, (*Psal. 110. 3.*) (2.) He draws away our corruptions by the forcible heats of his holy Spirit. There will soon be some
O 4 showers

showers of sorrow and grief, that we should so much and so long sin against the Lord, so loving and so good a Father. It will make our souls die to sin daily, and to be careful and jealous lest any affection should prove inordinate and prejudicial to Christs honour, and its own comfort. By these things we may know whether Christ be indeed a saving light unto our Souls, and so finding him to be, may drink in all the comfort that flows from so sweet a truth as this is.

Object. *We fear, may some say, Christ is not such a light to us, because we find our corruptions so strong in us, and our affections so dead to Christ?*

Ans. There may be something of Christ as such a light in thee, and yet this not clearly perceived nor felt by thee. There may be notwithstanding thy complaints some dawning of the day, some breakings forth of the morning light upon thy Soul. For Christs goings forth in enlightning, and quickning, and comforting grace, are prepared as the morning, (*Hos. 6. 3.*) Now the morning goeth forth gradually; small at the beginning, but growing

growing to perfection. Do not despise the day of small things. Though the morning be Cloudy, and Rainy, yet Christ hath prepared a wind to blow them away; He deals with Souls in this case as in the care of the blind man, (*Mark. 8. 23, 24.*) He caused him at first to see but imperfectly, he saw men walking as Trees; afterwards clearly. So he will deal with thee. Though thou goest forth in the morning, yet ere long, thou wilt be fair as the Moon, yea, clear as the Sun, (*Cant. 6. 10.*)

Use 3. Suffer the word of Exhortation. (1.) Let all be perswaded to receive Christ this true light. We see our need of natural light, and who rejects it? Who loves not the light more than darkness? Who opens not their windows and doors to receive the light of the Sun? How much more should we open our eyes and hearts to entertain Christ the Spiritual and saving light? Let us all pray with *David, Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us,* (*Psal. 4. 6.*) None but the blind do undervalue the benefit of light, none but weak Eyes are offended at it; none but adulterers and thieves fly from it. None but

but ignorant, or wicked, or hypocrites undervalue Christ, and when he is willing to be a light to them, love darkness rather than light. Owls and Bats love the night. Darkness is a suitable element to a dark heart. Melancholy Spirits love dark places. So did he we read of, (*Luke 8. 27.*) But after Christ had commanded the evil Spirit out of him, then he sat at Christs feet clothed, and in his right mind. O let us all go to Christ that he would be pleased, who commanded the light at first to shine out of darkness, to shine into all our hearts, to give us the light of saving knowledge, sound holiness, and divine comforts, that we may no more call light darkness and darkness light, but in this our day see the things that belong unto our peace before they be hidden from our eyes. (2.) Let us receive every discovery of Christ as a beam of light, and let us receive nothing as light but what comes from him: And above all things, let us walk while we have the light: Which leads us to the second Doctrine.

Doct. 2. *That it is the duty of all men to walk while they have the light.*
Hence

Hence is that Exhortation of the Apostle Paul, (Rom. 13. 12, 13.) *The night is far spent, the day is at hand, let us therefore cast off the deeds of darkness, and put on the Armour of light; Let us walk honestly as in the day, &c.* As if he had said, The night of your unregeneracy is past, and the day of grace has dawned upon your Souls; Therefore as men when they see the glimmering of the day cast off their night-clothes, so we seeing a glimmering of the Gospel, ought to cast off the works of darkness, as night-attire, & have no more to do with them; sins are called works of darkness, because many times they are done in the dark, and because they proceed from darkness, and if not cast off truly and timely, tend to bring men to utter darkness: And we should now put on the Armour of light, as those that rise out of their sleep put on their working apparel that they may be fit for the business of the day: So now, seeing the night of ignorance is past, adorn your selves with the works of light; *They that sleep, sleep in the night, and they*

they that are drunk, are drunk in the night : But let them that are of the day put on the graces of the Spirit of Christ, that bright and glistering armour, wherewith their Souls shall not only be armed, but adorned, such as shines to the glory of God and becomes those that desire to walk honestly as in the day. Christ himself did walk and work while he had his day, (*John 9. 4.*) *I must work the works of God, saith he, while it is day.* Let us follow his steps herein.

Qu. 1. Ye will say, *How may men be said to have the light ?*

Ans. By enjoying the Gospel of Christ. For though his personal presence and ministry are withdrawn, yet the light of the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ shines amongst us : And every word of Christ is light, (*Isa. 51. 4.*) *A Law shall proceed from me for a light of the people,* saith Christ. His word is the rule and standard of light, (*Isa. 8. 20.*) *To the Law and to the Testimony, if they*

they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light, (or, no morning) in them. This is that more sure word of prophecy which we shall do well we take heed unto, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, (2 Pet. i. 19.) Where the Apostle shews, that a written Revelation from the Word, is more sure than an immediate Revelation from heaven. Here I might shew some of those Truths the Gospel gives a more full and clear discovery of, than ever was before this glorious light came into the World. As the great Doctrine of the Trinity, the Incarnation of Christ; the great and dangerous evil of unbelief, that Christ came and put himself in the place of sinners, and died an accursed death to save men from unbelief; so that by his mediatory sacrifice there is a possibility for condemned unbelievers to be saved from that sentence that is gone out against them; He ordered Repentance and Remission of sins to be preached in his name; And that he that believeth in him shall be saved. And he stayed not till men sent to him

him, but he calls to them, (*Ezek. c. 18.*) *Why will ye dye, O house of Israel?*—Yea, The Gospel holds forth life to the greatest sinners, to the worst of men, if thy will indeed believe and turn in to God by Christ: *God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, (John 3. 16.) That whosoever believeth on him, (None excepted where Christ is offered, but those that except themselves) should not perish, but have eternal life.* Yea, the Gospel shews the way whereby men may be justified from those things from which they cannot be Justified by the Law of *Moses*; namely, by the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed by God to those that apprehend and apply the same by true faith, (*Phil. 3. 9.*) *Paul* desires to be found, not in his own righteousness, but in that righteousness which is through Christ, the righteousness, which is of God, by faith. So likewise, (*Rom. 3. 22.*) He speaks of the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe. Yea, life and immortality is brought to light by the

the Gospel, (2 Tim. 1. 10.) Obscurely under the Law, more clearly under the Gospel are these things revealed.

Qu. 2. Ye will say, *What is that walking in the light the Text enjoyns upon us?*

Ans. 1. It is a walking, or coming forth unto the light; as if Christ had said, Come forth that ye may see the light, (Isa. 49. 9.) Christ is there promised to be given for a covenant of the people, that he may say to the Prisoners, *Go forth and to them that are in darkness, Shew your selves.* God the Father speaks to Christ, in the verse before. *Thus saith the Lord, I will give thee for a Covenant to the people, that he may say to the Gentiles, go forth: That he might with power and efficacy say thus to them, as he did at the first beginning of all things say, Let there be light, and there was light: To the Prisoners, that is, to the Gentiles who are held fast by the cords, and in the fetters of sin in Satans Prison. Come forth*

forth to the light ; Receive Divine illumination : Come forth that ye may see your selves, your lost, dangerous, undone condition by nature, before it be too late to get help and recovery. It's said, (*John 3. 20.*) *Every one that doth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds be reprov'd. Ahab hateth Michaiah and Elijah, and took them for his enemies, because they discoverd his sins. Men love darknes rather than light, not only because they are unwilling others should see their sins, but because they are not willing to see them themselves ; But if we will listen to Christ, we must come forth to the light, and he that doth and would ever do truth, cometh to the light, that it may be made manifest that his works are wrought in God, as it is, verse 21.*

2. It is a walking into the light. This is that Christ speaks of in the verse after the Text ; *Believe in the light, that ye may be children of light : And so the sense is, Believe in me who am the light. And in v. 46. Christ adds further*

mer to clear this ; *I am come a light into the World, that whosoever believeth in me, should not abide in darkness.* So then when the Spirit of Christ works faith in our Souls, we are united to Christ, ingrafted into him by these blessed bonds of union : His Spirit dwelleth in us, and he himself dwelleth in our hearts by faith ; when we thus receive Christ Jesus the Lord by believing in his name, we walk into the light indeed, (*John 1. 12. Col. 2. 6.*) When we accept him upon the terms of the Gospel, in all his Offices, Natures, Ordinances, and Commands, and continue in them, we obey that which is required in the Text.

3. Walk up to the Light : Obey the light. *I am the light of the World, saith Christ, (John 8. 12.) He that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.* Some speak much of following the light within them, and it is indeed the duty of all to walk up to the light they have received. They that have only the light of Reason, that Can-
P dle

dle of the Lord, should walk up to to that light; And to what of God they that are Heathens have, or may know by the works of Creation: And so they that have the light of the Scriptures, ought to obey the same, and follow the Rules thereof. And so where the light of grace is, there is expected an answerable living up to the same. *If we thus walk in the light, as God is in the light, we have fellowship with him, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin, (1 John 1. 6.)* This goeth under various notions in the word; *Walk in wisdom, (Col. 4. 5.)* That is, with care and caution in regard of the manifold dangers and extremities we are liable to. Walk uprightly. *Peter* did not thus walk in that particular mentioned, *(Gal. 2. 14.)* He did not *ὁρθοποδεῖν*, foot it aright, as he ought to have done, but went against his light, for which the Apostle *Paul* reproveth him. Walk circumspectly, *(Eph. 5. 15.) ἀκριβῶς περιπατεῖν*, Walk exactly, or precisely and accurately—Walk in the Spirit, *(Gal. 5. 16.)* In and after the Counsels and motions of

of Gods holy Spirit? To obey his voice, when we hear him saying, *This is the way, walk ye in it.* Thus we should walk in all holy duties, and even in our ordinary Callings. A man may walk in the flesh, even in the worst of Religions, and a man may and ought to walk in the Spirit, when he is about the works of his ordinary and particular Calling. This is also termed a walking according to Rule, (Gal. 6. 16.) *As many as walk according to this Rule, peace be on them and mercy.* Religion lies not in dead and unactive habits and principles, but there must be activity and operation; there must be walking not in this or that single or particular duty, but in a holy tract, course and conversation; so walking imports: And yet we may not walk at random, but regularly and according to rule. *σοφει τῷ χαρῶνι*; To walk in order, in a comely and decent manner, the word signifies. A Christian is not left to Rove up and down at large where he list, but to keep within bounds. and to observe his measures in walking. Yea, it must be according to this Rule, *τῷ χαρῶνι τέτρω*; That is,

is, the Rule of the new creature, spoken of in the very verse before. The Gospel in the word of it, and and the Gospel in the work of it, each of them is a Rule to a Christian. The latter is here intended. To act and walk according to the principles and Inclinations of grace, and a sanctified heart and nature. This is also set forth under the notion of walking in love, (*Eph. 5. 2.*) in love to God and Christ, in love to his House and Ordinances, and Servants, in love to our Friends, yea even to our Enemies. So it is styled a walking in the Truth, (*verse 4.*) of the second Epistle of St. John.) In the truth of Doctrine, in truth of heart, in truth of words and expressions to all men. It is called a walking in newness of life, which is to act according to the height of those principles which are in them. Also a walking as Christ walked, (*1 John 2. 6.*) A shewing forth the vertues of him who is the light, and hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light, (*1 Pet. 2. 9.*) And once again: It is called walk-
ing

as Children of light, (*Eph. 5. 8.*)
are all the Children of the light, saies
the Apostle in another place, (*1 Thes. 5.*
6.) Therefore let us not sleep as do others,
let us watch and be sober. O let us
our thus to carry it! Then we walk
and up to the light indeed, when
we have nothing to do with the
works of darkness, which become
Children of light but Children
of darkness rather. It is now broad
day light, the light of the Gospel
shines full in our faces; every one
may now condemn those that pra-
ctise deeds of darkness. To speak more
particularly, yet very briefly. To walk up
in Gospel-light, it lies in these fol-
lowing things.

1. It is to walk openly, with all
singleness of heart, as we read the
primitive Christians did, (*Acts 2. 46.*)
we walk so intricately, with such
turnings and Windings, are so full
of darkness, as we know not what to
make of them. But to be of plain
parts, as *Jacob* was, that the honesty
of our hearts and designs may be seen
in all our words and dealings, this

is becoming such as are Children
the light and of the day.

2. It is to walk exemplarily; shine as lights in a dark World, Beacons set upon a hill, which give light round about, (*Phil. 2. 15.*) To have our light so shine before men, as the seeing our good works, may glorify God, (*Mat. 5. 16.*) God hung up those lights at the first Creation (*Gen. 1.*) That they should give light upon the earth. Thus we should point out to others the way to Heaven by the light of our examples, and carry a Torch before them that will enlighten them, and will not go into the kennel, and walk in mire and dirt of wicked waies. The evil deeds of men are made manifest and reprov'd also by such a carriage, and if by this we turn others from the waies of sin to righteous paths, will brighten our own Crown, and we shall shine as Stars for ever and ever. Light propagates it self, and so should all enlightened Christians endeavour to communicate their light to the good of others.

3. It is to walk purely, in holiness of life. A spot is easily seen in a Sun beam ; we should walk without rebuke, blameless, harmless, without spots, as much as may be ; spot not our consciences, nor our conversations, but be undefiled in the way, and keep our selves unspotted from the World : To abstain from not only apparent evil, but the very appearance of evil. *Quicquid male coloratum est ;* All that hath the shew and colour of evil, *As he that hath called us is holy, so let us be holy in all manner of conversation.*

4. It is to walk knowingly, in the light of Spiritual Judgment and understanding. The Apostle requires Husbands to dwell with their Wives as men of knowledge, (*1 Pet. 3. 7.*) So ought all Christians to walk as those that know the evil of sin, to hate and avoid it : As those that know Satans wiles and devices, to shun and flee from them : As those that know the vanity of the World, to be dead and crucified to it by the death of Christ, as *Paul* was, (*Gal. 6. 14.*) As those that have seen the beauty of Christ, and tasted of his love, to be enamoured with him,

P 4

him, and to cleave in love to him who loved them first. In a word, if they know any thing of his will, to be found doing it, that they may be blessed in their deed.

5. It is to walk cheerfully, in the light of Joy. Those Christians that spend their daies in sadness, bring an evil report upon Gods good waies, and dishearten and discourage many, who will look upon Gods waies as things that tend to destroy the comfort of their lives. God loves a cheerful giver, and a holy cheerful liver. Avoid sinful frothy mirth; the Joy of the Lord is your strength. Sometimes indeed sin is as a Thief in the Candle that does waite a Christians Joy, and dim his comfort, which yet if truly repented of, may be recovered, and made to shine more bright. But let a believer keep off from avoidable sins, and live in the exercise of faith, and he may rejoyce with Joy unspeakable, and full of glory, and strangers intermeddle not with this Joy. This is to walk in the light, when we walk unto the light, into the light, and up to the light.

Use. Let

Use. Let me urge this exhortion of Christ upon you all, and upon my self. Let us walk while we have the light. Some sit still idle all the day of the Gospel; Others walk in contrary waies, but whatever others do, let us be found in obedience to this command of Christ. Consider to help us herein;

1. It is the end why we have the light. We give our servants light to work by, not to play by. No more does God give the glorious light of the Gospel to men to dally and trifle with, but to work out their own salvation by.

2. If we thus walk as hath been shewn, we shall have cause to rejoyce that ever we had this blessed light. The Psalmist praises God for the great lights set up in the visible Heavens, (*Psal. 136. 7, 8, 9.*) *The Sun to Rule by day, and the Moon and Stars by night.* But what praise shall we be bound to give unto God for Christ and the Gospel of Christ, if while it shineth among us, we do as men do when the Sun ariseth?

arise? What is that? The Psalmist tells us, (*Psal. 104. 22, 23.*) *Man goeth forth to his work and to his labour until the evening.* This Sun of Gospel light is given us, not that we should play away our Souls into destruction by carnal security, but to get evidences of our Salvation with fear and trembling.

3. The light will not alwaies shine, but darkness will come upon us. Hence the Lord in the Text useth this Argument; *Yet a little while the light is with you, walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you.*

1. The darkness of Gospel-removal. The longest day hath a night following it; We have enjoyed the Gospel-light many years, and the brighter the day hath been, and yet abused, it may end in dreadful darkness. Christ threatned *Ephesus* for the loss of her first love and works, to come to her quickly, and remove her Candlestick (& the Candle consequently) except she repented,

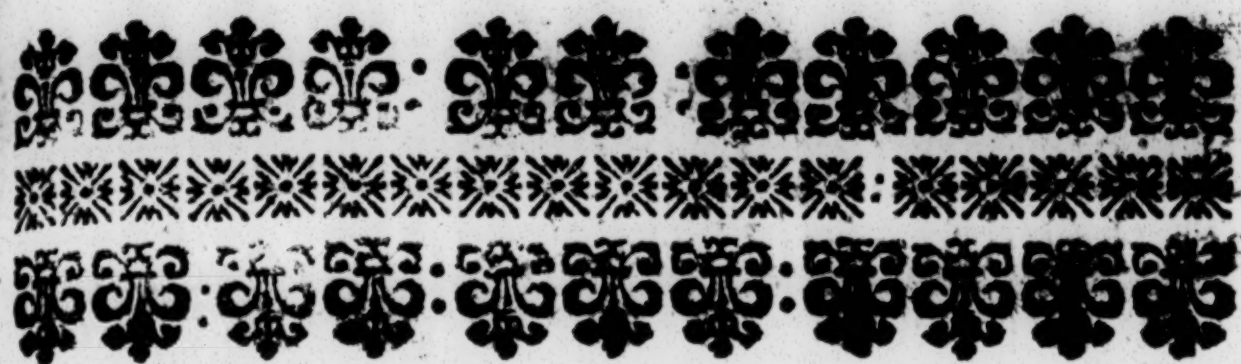
ted, (*Rev. 2. 4, 5.*) And doth not he seem to speak the same to *England*, and to his Churches here at this day O let us yet in this our day know the things that belong unto our peace, before they be hidden from our eyes.

2. The darkness of death, (*Eccel. 12. 2.*) While the Sun, or the light, or the Moon, or the Stars be not darkened, &c. *Then shall the dust return to the Earth as it was, &c.* that is, Before the outward parts of the body, or the inward parts of the mind decay by old age, the forerunners of death, and death it self overtake us. We are exhorted to do our work while it is day, and that with our might, (*Eccle. 9. 10.*) *For there is no work in the grave whither we go.* And Christ saith, (*John 9. 4. verse.*) *The night cometh when no man can work.* Now if we are going, and the night coming, how greatly doth it concern us all, to day, even while it is called to day, to work for God, and for our Souls with all our might, whatever he has put into our hand to do.

3. The

3. The darkness of Hell, that blackness of darkness which is for ever, (*Jude 12. verse*) The Children of the Kingdom are above others cast into utter darkness, (*Matth. 8. 12.*) Let me end all with that of the Prophet *Jeremiah* (*Chap. 13. verse 16.*) And O that the Lord would cause it to take some good effect upon us. Give glory to the Lord your God before he cause darkness, before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye look for light, he turn it into the Shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.

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F I N I S.

E R R A T A

IN the Epistle, r. *persuasion*; in the Book p. 2. l. 8.
 r. *remove*, p. 9. l. 10. r. *willingly*, p. 14. l. 24. r. *were*,
 p. 53. l. 14. add the word *it*, p. 63. l. 4. r. *like*, p. 65. l. 29. r.
this, p. 95. l. 3. c. *principium*, p. 97. l. 23. r. *Church*, p. 108.
 l. 23. r. *rottenness*, p. 125. l. 12. let *a* be left out, p. 127.
 l. 21. r. *Use* r. p. 137. l. 8. r. *is*, p. 159. l. 8. add the word *not*,
 p. 170. l. 5. r. *presence*, p. 179. l. 10. r. *the*, p. 181. l. 5. add *day*,
 of, p. 184. l. 14. r. *obstinacy*, p. 218. r. of, p. 223. l. 7. r. *works*.



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